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LOVE STORIES OF COURT BEAUTIES

FRANZISCA, BARONESS VON HEDEMANN

FRANZISKA, BARONESS VON HEDEMANN

Founder of the celebrated House of "Frederic," the most distinguished and exclusive establishment of its kind, patronized by the elite of Europe, and crowned heads of almost every court.

LOVE STORIES OF COURT BEAUTIES

BY

FRANZISCA, BARONESS VON HEDEMANN

ILLUSTRATED

NEW YORK

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PREFACE

To my knowledge, I am the first *modiste* to attempt an autobiographical record of her pursuit of the art of dressmaking. It will be very simple, because I possess neither the art of literary values, nor the imaginative gift of the novelist to dramatise the famous men and women it has been my privilege to know.

My real excuse for writing about these crowned heads, who to-day are bowed low with the grief that has come upon them, is because I too am an exile from the gaiety that once was theirs, and which has changed so dreadfully to mourning and distress. I was obliged to leave England where my heart still is, and where my dearest friends and relatives reside, because my late husband was of the German House of Hanover. The details of my departure like those of many other loyal friends in England, who in the terrific perplexities of the war problem were compelled to forfeit their business, their homes, and their money, in obedience to new laws of a new situation, are too well known for repetition here.

I was given ten days in which to leave England, and the period was extended through special influence, to three weeks. The pressure of conditions all over England, against the slightest German element, is incomprehensibly strict. Although I applied to Her Majesty Queen Mary of England, whom I had known since she was a child, a most gracious letter from her in reply to mine made it clear that Her Majesty was powerless to intercede.

So, as quickly as it was possible for me to close the House of Frédéric, to sell whatever I could in a short time (since my bank account, my jewels, my papers, were all seized by the government to be held until the end of the war), I set sail to this land of liberty, where I hoped to find a new occupation for my professional ability.

Briefly, this is the adventure which has forced upon me the leisure to put together these reminiscences of the wonderful women of Paris and London, who have inspired me.

The House of "Frédéric" was established in London at 14-15 Lower Grosvenor Place, in 1893. It became to the world of fashion in England what Worth was in Paris. In fact, it was Worth who advised me to adopt the name of Frédéric. How it became famous, and the beautiful women who cre-

ated fame for it, is the reason that these remembrances of those wonderful leaders of an aristocracy now drenched with the horrors of the great European disaster called War are here written.

Of course it has been my privilege, and as a *modiste* my good luck, to have gowned nearly all the Queens of Europe and their followers. In London, in this way, I came to know the *élite* of English aristocracy. In their train, naturally, followed the beauties of the peerage, the most celebrated *prima donnas,* the most brilliant actresses. At random, I remember such international beauties as the Countess of Warwick, Duchess of Montagénu de Montagénu, the historical and imperious Duchess of Manchester, who was later the Duchess of Devonshire; the Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos, the Duchess Katherine of Westminster, the Duchess of Portland, the Duchess of Newcastle, and a host of others. All the grand personages of the past twenty-five years flocked in and out of my *salon* to consult me about dress,—and other things that this fascinating subject inspires. They have all remained my good friends, and they were all *persona grata* at the house of the Prince and Princess of Wales, subsequently King Edward and Queen Alexandra.

Fate, I am sure, appears usually in the guise of some luxurious temptation, which we must pursue irresistibly or miss the chances of fortune. If one could only know the sudden turn in the romantic roads of destiny which some of these aristocratic beauties I have known made!

Many of us misinterpret the good intentions of our destiny because we fear the consequences of the unforeseen. In my own case, I took full advantage of my destiny. Perhaps I was temperamentally adapted to it. A taste for extravagance, a passion for beauty and elaborate *toilettes,* an appreciative talent for what makes the coquetry of a woman's nature the supreme art of her being, these were the intense fires of my youth.

It was the Paris of the second empire that really sealed my career as a *modiste.* The luxury, the gaiety, the love of pleasure so fully satiated by the grandeur of that period of the second empire in France, gave me the foretaste of my future calling. It fastened upon my soul those wonderful schemes of colour and artistic combinations of exquisite fabrics, that in after years I used with such success.

My memory is excellent, and I absorbed into my being the beautiful and vital impressions it received.

PREFACE

The real origin of my desire to become a *modiste* took hold of me when I was a very young girl at a grand reception I attended in the palace of the Tuileries. The occasion was a riot of beauty and splendour. I can still see before me such marvels of beauty as the Princess de Sagan, the Princess Metternich, Madame Gallifet, and a host of others, in their wonderful creations of the celebrated Worth; in their midst Her Imperial Highness Eugénie. This whole event is beautifully interpreted in a glorious picture by Winterhalter. The styles of that period are returning, and Winterhalter's picture might almost be a representation of the product of to-day.

Well, it was this vision, this hour of thrilling adventure, that fastened my desire to become some day famous in the art of gowning women myself. I never imagined that this fanciful dream should, or could, ever be realised.

It happened, however, with the temptation of the unforeseen.

In the summer of the middle sixties, I went with my aunt to Homburg est Mont, at that time the resort of all the *grande monde* and *demi-monde* celebrities. There one would meet at the gaming tables, elbowing each other, a grand duchess, a Cora Pearl,

a Baruchi, a Soubise, all adorned in the most gorgeous, brilliant, distinguished *toilettes,* all tempting fortune unmercifully, while the mysteries of *rouge et noir* called for an almost unholy silence.

Monsieur Blanc, the founder of these marvellous gambling rooms in Homburg and Wiesbaden, drew about him and his exquisite surroundings the most cosmopolitan society imaginable. There are many, of course, who remember, as I do, the picturesque figure of the Princess Souvaroff, the beautiful Russian, who was the sister of the Countess de Gâlve. The Princess was always superbly gowned. She entered the gambling rooms followed by a great many cavaliers, in fact she was so surrounded by them that when her party approached the gambling tables it was almost impossible for anybody else to reach them. The Princess Souvaroff was the living spirit of these *salons.* Her almost devoted companion was usually the celebrated Paul Demidoff (Prince Murat), usually playing with Garcia, the famous Spaniard who broke the bank several times. The picture of this beautiful woman, surrounded by the most reckless and daring men of the period, was savage, barbaric, stirring to a degree. Being quite young, impressionable, with an

inclination to enjoy the superficial grandeur of the time, I naturally fell under the influence of it.

In this brilliant, suffocating, perfume-laden atmosphere of extravagance, so intensely interesting, so tragicomic and vital in its recklessness of human romance,—I too met my fate. I was young and I was loyally chaperoned. He was then a gay lieutenant. I asked my aunt to allow me to be introduced to him. We danced all the evening. Next morning, a most glorious dawn, we met and galloped through that sublime pine forest, which at that time was a romantic setting famous in the romantic history of European royalty. My hasty departure from this Eden of nature, which my aunt thought wise and judicious, did not banish from my mind and my too imaginative person, the impression of that ride through the forest.

I returned to Paris heart-broken. I did not wish to go out—theatres, balls, concerts, failed to excite my interest. I pined, I fell ill, and nobody could or would give it a name. The Duke de Bassano, the life-long friend of the beautiful Empress Eugénie, met me on horseback in the Bois de Boulogne in Paris one morning.

"How are you, *chérie petite?*" he asked.

I could hardly reply.

"Ah, ah, *mal d'amour,*" he said.

Yes, it was so.

Still my relative was inexorable. She would not, she could not hear of such a thing. Different creeds, different social standing, different politics, everything about it to her seemed impracticable and undesirable. However, this did not daunt me. I ran away to meet the man I loved more than anything else. He met me at a little village on the Rhine—that glorious and beautiful river where so many lovers have found their answer. We returned to Paris and were married in a little chapel the distinction of which was one of the brutalities of the Commune.

This incident, the great personal event of my life, typifies the spirit of the times which launched me upon a career that never lost its romantic flavour, that kept me forever eagerly in pursuit of the greatest of all temptations to women, to inspire the admiration and homage of the eternal heroes of the eternal fairy tale of every woman's heart.

For six years my husband and I travelled in the United States just after the Civil War. During our absence, his property had been confiscated during the Franco-Prussian war, and we had to begin work in earnest. That is why we settled in Eng-

land, where he became a teacher of classics. I went to Paris to study the art of dressmaking, designing and creating gowns.

I went to Worth, the most celebrated and the greatest of *couturiers*. He was the leading man of his time. The aristocracy of the united world came to him, and it was he who instilled into me the great desire to become a shining light in the world of well dressed women, as he himself was. Hence the success of my business career. Although the supreme inspiration for my work came from Worth, I can still say with absolute honesty that the gowns I designed were my very own, that they were no spurious imitations or copies of any other gowns made anywhere in the world. Dressmaking became a passion as uplifting and important as any great work of art becomes to the artist. I found it an unmitigated pleasure, a perpetual source of diversion, an absolute treat, and I never felt happier than when I could demonstrate my talent upon the living model of some aristocratic beauty, to enhance through my art, all her exquisite charm. When I look back upon those years in the retrospect of the great wealth and beauty of those celebrities in art and fashion, who alas were too numerous for complete recollection, I seem to see them "as in a look-

ing-glass." The quick-silver is a little dim, therefore the reflection my glass gives must be sharpened by a skill that returns with effort.

I learned some classic rules, however, that we always apply to the woman of fashion and good taste in dress. To be really well-dressed a woman must not shock society either by her daring in design or her daring in colour. The proper blending of colour is an enormous feature in dress. Primarily, the *plastique* of the figure must be accentuated by classic draperies. By this fundamental process of discovery, an ugly woman can be made to look beautiful. It is in the combination of colour that the real secret of the art of dressmaking lies. If cultivated by the *modiste* with an artistic appreciation of this fact, the designing of each gown becomes quite as interesting as the painter's interpretation of colour within the scope of beauty on his canvas.

Of course, one can fail in this too. It is quite possible to select with judgment certain expensive materials and to fashion them into garments that are beautiful in design, and yet fall far short of one's creative ambition. In my judgment, it is not satisfying to be famous and successful merely as a creator of clothes that are pleasing to the eye. Gowns should be a real work of art. Without the

HE FITTING ROOM IN THE HOUSE OF FREDERIC
this very attractive room the author came to know most intimately members
the royal household of almost every court of Europe.

artist's appreciation of colour of course this is impossible.

The most important rule which I discovered in the course of my experience, is the gift to make the woman you are gowning realise that you understand her needs. She must feel when she enters your establishment that the frame, the atmosphere, the mood of your establishment pleases her. I gave the greatest possible care and attention to every little detail of my reception room, so that every woman who crossed my threshold found the surroundings soothing to her. There is no event so important in a woman's life as the all-important business of ordering a new gown. It is a time of great anxiety to her. It is the crisis that decides whether her clothes are going to make her happy. What woman was ever happy in clothes she didn't like? Therefore, it makes all the difference in the world whether, when she visits her *modiste,* she feels "in tune" with the gowns which are displayed, as it were, on the knees of the gods.

Who knows what may depend upon a new gown?

According to her mood, her outward bearing, the *modiste* will be impressed with the entire character of her requirements. Therefore, every *modiste* who is the creator of the outward and visible sign

of her model's attractiveness must gain her confidence. The two must be *en rapport.*

Much depends on first impressions. The beauty who comes to the *modiste* to be made, if possible, more beautiful, must come to a home of taste, a place where it is impossible that anything unbeautiful could find even a temporary abode. There must be a sense of all-pervading restfulness, and something of joyous expectancy in the atmosphere. It must be remembered that the home of the *modiste* to the ambitious woman of fashion is the place of unrevealed beauty, which she seeks. This is a state of mind which cannot be produced by the upholsterer or the decorator, nor by any display, however alluring, of beautiful externals alone. It is a condition which is brought about by the personality of the *modiste* herself. There is only one type of woman born with the instinct of fashion who requires no advice, and that is the French woman. She is filled and always will be with the perfection of taste and smartness. A ribbon, a bow, a flower, she will adjust these instinctively to improve her beauty. Then too, the French woman is a born epigram of fashion. She knows how to walk well, how to talk well, and she will make men notice the gown she wears so piquantly. Her *lingerie* is

dainty to a fault, her boots and shoes are little *chef d'œuvres.*

In London, where the English beauty thrives, I created an environment that inspired their most radiant and distinctive moods. I spent a great deal of money in creating a *mise en scène.* My own room was off the reception room on the first floor. I generally could be found there.

Upon entering this reception room one may have seen a few odds and ends, a length of lace, a dainty piece of *lingerie,* a *robe de nuit,* that held one's attention. Possibly, there was only a hat that compelled immediate notice. Those who came to my *salon* expecting a display, a gallery of robes, were disappointed. My method was not to dazzle, and yet my gowns stood out phenomenal for their good taste, their exquisite materials, and their elegance.

One of my *salons* was furnished in old rose panelling, with a white and gold frieze and was hung with beautiful brocade pastoral, over real lace curtains. The furniture, which matched the period, stood on a carpet of grey pearl. An archway, designed after the style of Louis XV, divided this *salon* from another, the ceiling of which was embossed with twenty-two karat gold. In this room the panels were of the shade of *Rose du Barry,*

with a border of white and gold, toned down by frames of grey pearl. On the walls hung medallion portraits of such bygone beauties as the Duchess of Gainesborough, Duchess of Cleveland, Marie Antoinette, Marquise de Chevreuille, the Duchess de Lamballe. A huge royal blue vase, the statue of an Egyptian water-carrier, Dresden china shepherds and shepherdesses, poised on golden velvet *consoles,* made this *salon* more than attractive.

Even my fitting-rooms were panelled entirely in dark oak, with quaint lamps, and huge Etruscan vases. An old Tyrolean chest of the date of 1605, filled with precious laces, gave an old-world tone to the entire room, with its ancient spinning-wheel in one corner. One room I called my royal chamber because on its grey-blue walls hung the royal appointments given me by Her Majesty Queen Alexandra, Her Majesty Queen Mary, Her Majesty Queen of Roumania, the late Duchess of Teck, besides a host of other photographs of royal beauties.

My *salon* was next to the Spanish Embassy in London, the throng of footmen and carriages outside my door often making passersby think that I was holding a reception. When His Majesty King Alphonso was in town, he usually lunched at the Embassy, and on those occasions I always decorated

HE RECEPTION ROOM IN THE HOUSE OF FREDERIC
ne of the quaint rooms which constituted a temple at whose shrine the most
autiful and the most distinguished ladies of two hemispheres worshipped with
tense zeal and great ardor.

my house with the royal colours of Spain in his honour. I was so close to Buckingham Palace, my windows overlooked the royal garden, and when in happier times the ceremony of "trooping the colours" was customary, my flag would be seen fluttering in the wind from Hyde Park Corner, because as I had been honoured with so many royal appointments, I was privileged to fly the colours upon all great occasions.

My task as court dressmaker was to accomplish for these great beauties of the Court of St. James exactly what a flattering painter would do on his canvas in their portraits. I adorned their natural graces, I made them walk, and their gowns talk for them.

My first success was in creating certain impertinent creations of cotton with velvet, or silk with *cretonne,* or cloth with silk, and my riding habits were also distinctive. At this time the ladies did not ride astride, as they do now. The riding habits of that day were made with little stiff collars for men's ties, and even the hats were like the men's silk hats. There was a good deal of rebellion among men against this fashion who, when they saw the ladies coming along Rotten Row, dressed like men, said cynically, "Where do we come in?"

Nothing seemed to please the English woman more than to be entirely in sympathy with the man in the Street, and so at this time, she adopted the sportsmanlike appearance in dress and in hats, of the men, so as to become more comradely. The English woman has divided with the English man his love of golf, cricket, lawn tennis, of swimming, skating and hunting.

But, I am afraid I am trespassing, and must proceed with the stories of really important men and women. Still, it was indeed a sad experience, when, on that winter morning in London, I awoke and found that my exemption would not be granted, and I started for New York. I arrived close to the Statue of Liberty on a very gloomy morning, and I wondered what fate would have in store for me.

INTRODUCTION

In Europe, at least in my time, all nations were ruled by monarchs, and those who attained the privilege of meeting royalty, were favoured beyond the rest of mankind. It was in my capacity as court dressmaker, that I enjoyed the privilege of a rather enviable acquaintance with royalty. My own views of them are guided by a most agreeable personal knowledge. Those royalties whom I have had the honour to know, have been supremely graceful, well bred, and considerate of others. The splendour with which royalty surrounds itself, is, after all, merely a necessary defence against the human tide that would otherwise overwhelm them with its onrush of curiosity.

It is the world's way towards royalty, to be curious. In the present upheaval against monarchies and monarchs the reason for this curiosity will doubtless become more understandable, particularly as the traditions of their inner lives become exposed to the people.

The beginning of this record, which is over-

shadowed by the dethronement of the Czar of Russia, becomes intricate from the realisation that all the royal families of Europe are closely related. The revolution in Russia, which at this moment of writing is absorbing the world's interest, seems to cast its ghostly warning over England.

The relation of England's throne with German blood, with Russian royalty, makes an issue of political importance that cannot be ignored. The personality, the character, the human traditions of the royal actors and actresses in the new drama which the world is presenting to us to-day, become especially significant, and, therefore, I must recall the relationship of these great identities in this new historical drama.

It has frequently been said that if King Edward VII had been alive at the outbreak of the war, his remarkable diplomacy, the force of his personality would have prevented it. King Edward inherited a great deal of the wisdom and charm of his distinguished mother, Queen Victoria. Her Majesty was born in England, her father German, her mother English. When she was called to the throne, she was one of the most wonderful, charming and highly educated girls imaginable. Her beauty was not spectacular. It lay rather in

her exquisite colouring, her sweet expression, and her calm, tender eyes. She was thoroughly unsophisticated because her education had been zealously guarded from any knowledge of the world. Her imagination had been suppressed, and when she came to the throne of England, it was with no hindrance of imaginative splendour. Her engagement to the Prince Consort, Albert the Good, as he was called, began at a garden party which was held in Richmond Park at White Lodge, where she fell in love with him at first sight. He, too, belonged to a German house, the family of Coburg-Gotha, renowned for handsome and stalwart men. When he first arrived in England, the Court Ladies unanimously voted that he was an Adonis. This brought about a good deal of trouble, for Queen Victoria, being human and very much in love, became intensely jealous of her Ladies-in-Waiting.

Among the attractive and handsome women of the English court was Lady Florence Hastings. Justly or unjustly, she was suspected by Her Majesty Queen Victoria of being a favourite of the Prince Consort. There are various forms of torture which the etiquette of royalty can inflict upon members of the Court of inferior rank. Queen Victoria's method of visiting her wrath upon Lady

Florence Hastings was a refined cruelty. The Queen would frequently keep her standing for hours, until she almost fainted. It was a delicate way of confirming an indelicate suspicion. Finally Lady Hastings was ostracised, the Hastings family never appeared at Court, and her Ladyship died at an early age, of a broken heart.

This incident of Queen Victoria's adolescent period of romance seems hard to reconcile with the discretion and care shown later by Her Majesty in bringing up her family. All her life she loved very deeply, and all her life she lived very simply.

The more one considers the blood relationship of the crowned heads of Europe, the more one wonders how this war could ever have become a fact, when one remembers that Queen Victoria was the grandmother of the Kaiser, the grandmother of King George and numerous other crowned heads. Queen Victoria actually adored her son-in-law, Kaiser Friedrich Wilhelm, who, during his reign, was in reality the greatest friend England ever possessed.

As a woman, her modesty of *toilettes* was famous. Her admiration for Disraeli confirms the general impression of her supreme taste for diplomacy. He made her Empress of India, and doubtless her own

wisdom vastly helped his reputation as Lord Beaconsfield.

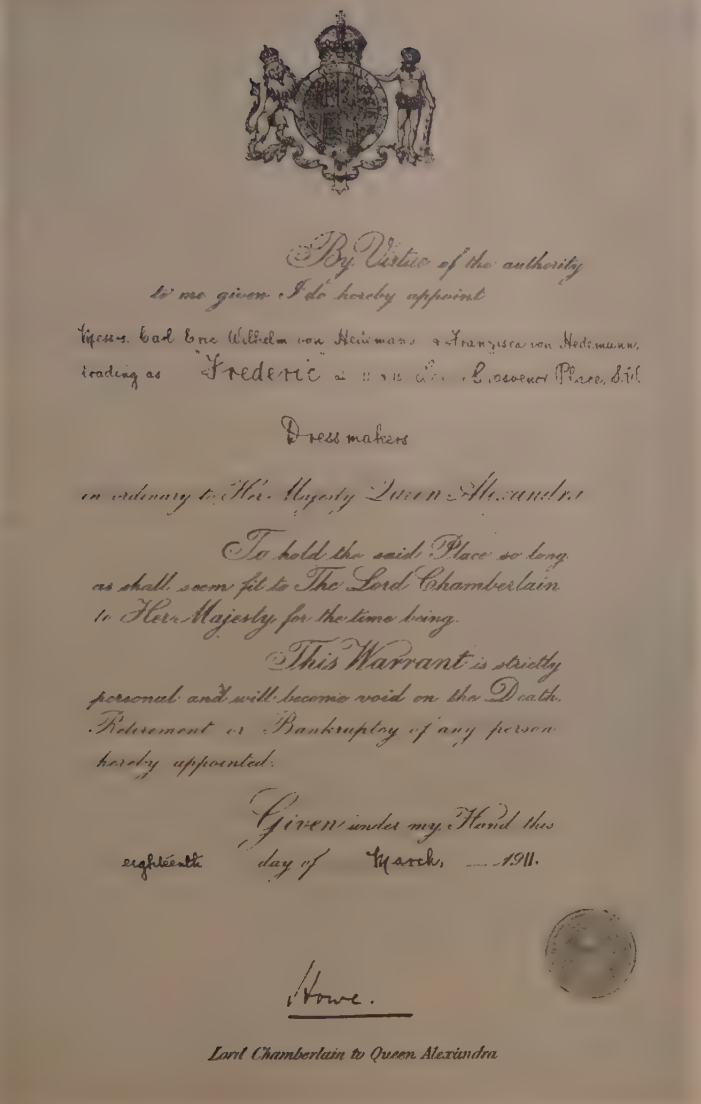
It is interesting to remember that Disraeli in politics was for peace, for international good will *towards* Europe. His conservatism was entirely in sympathy with the character of his Queen, and his antagonism towards Gladstone was merely political. As men, they mutually had many things in common.

The influence of English women at Court upon the political conflicts between Disraeli and Gladstone was largely inspired by their social ambitions. Both Tories and Whigs played a great rôle in social affairs, and it was the custom for Court beauties to attain notoriety by their cleverness in political intelligence.

Among the most brilliant of these court beauties of this time was the Duchess of Manchester who was well known as the guiding political spirit of Lord Hartington, the leader of the Tories. The Duke of Manchester was really a nonentity, and agreeably played that one-stringed instrument in society called "second fiddle." Most of the brilliant coups of Lord Hartington's political career were planned by the Duchess of Manchester for him. She was a dashing, emotional woman who in

her younger days became famous for disguising herself in an officer's uniform of the Hanoverian Light Brigade so that she could visit the officers' mess, and enjoy the liberties of these occasions.

Her intense cleverness prevented any open scandal. Before her marriage she was the Countess von Alten, and created a furor at the Court of the blind King of Hanover, where beautiful women were as common as the sands by the sea. Her sister, Countess Grothe, though almost as beautiful, was an entirely different type. She was *petite* and dainty, while the Duchess of Manchester was tall, imperious and very haughty. Her manner towards inferiors was sometimes rude. She was the most perfectly formed woman among the beauties of England, and on this account scandalous people declared that she never wore any undergarments. The reason for this, it was said, was because she desired to live up to the standard of the ancient Romans, whose women were so fascinating and so statuesque. The aim and purpose of this Court beauty, under the reign of Queen Victoria, was to capture the Prince of Wales at a period when his youth was most impressionable. To the Duchess of Manchester belongs the record at the Court of St. James of inaugurating the Prince of Wales' taste and admiration for lovely



By Virtue of the authority
to me given I do hereby appoint

Messrs. Carl Ernst Wilhelm von Heidemann & Franziska von Heidemann,
trading as Frederic [illegible] Grosvenor Place, S.W.

Dress makers

in ordinary to Her Majesty Queen Alexandra

To hold the said Place so long
as shall seem fit to The Lord Chamberlain
to Her Majesty for the time being.

This Warrant is strictly
personal and will become void on the Death
Retirement or Bankruptcy of any person
hereby appointed.

Given under my Hand this
eighteenth day of March, 1911.

Howe.

Lord Chamberlain to Queen Alexandra

TIFICATE GRANTED BY QUEEN ALEXANDRA

gracious Majesty Queen Alexandra's appointment was bestowed upon the
nor in appreciation of the author's great endeavor to please the beautiful
een and meet her exquisite taste in gowning exclusively.

women. She was the guiding star in the brilliant career which King Edward VII pursued among the beauties of his period. As the years fastened upon them both, she still remained a favourite advisor in his international diplomacy, and after his marriage she became the confidential friend of Queen Alexandra, from the time she entered London as a bride.

Queen Alexandra was the most beautiful personification of everything that is perfect in woman, and I say this with a personal knowledge of this wonderful woman and exquisite Queen. She was one of the beautiful daughters of the King of Denmark. She was modestly brought up, quietly educated. When the Prince of Wales first met her at the Court of Hessen in Darmstadt, he was overpowered by her modesty, her simplicity, and her beauty. From the time she entered London and received that marvellous ovation, until to-day, she has retained the love of the English people and their admiration. The grace of her demeanour, her glorious figure, her gracious manners, her unfailing courtesy, and her wonderful taste in clothes, through which she became the best dressed woman in Europe, had made her the favourite Queen of all Europe.

No breath of scandal has ever reached the world about her, but there lurks in the heart of Alexandra a secret romance. One glorious thought dwells in her mind of a man who suddenly became one of the accomplished officers in the Egyptian war. He was a great friend of her favourite son, the late Duke of Clarence. He worshipped on her shrine till he died, and when he was called away in comparative youth, Her Majesty Alexandra never quite got over the shock. It was after his death that she always bore that little atmosphere of deep sorrow in her eyes, of deep grief in her heart. There is an altar in her heart where she worships that adoration of her youth in secret. She recalls those happy times when in a little canoe they glided up and down the beautiful river canopied by the weeping willows, in the shadow of those sublime old oaks in Windsor Forest, bathed in the moonlight of those evenings of supreme happiness. It was an idyl, and I believe that Her Majesty always dwelt upon this beautiful romance with a sad but glorious satisfaction that to the pure all is pure. Her life has been one of continuous charity for others. She has a wonderful propensity for gowning herself; she is imbibed with that wonderful sense of rhythm and symphony in colour. Her harmonious combination

of the ultra smart and yet distinguished *toilettes* was always a creation of her own, given to her dressmaker. Every woman at the Court of St. James was ambitious to imitate her effect in gowns. I believe that in her saddest moment she never forgot outward appearances, which is a graceful virtue all women will do well to cultivate.

The relationship of royalty between Germany and England extended in so many directions over Europe, and by such diplomatic matrimonial directions as Queen Victoria herself planned, that it would seem as though a deliberate purpose to establish universal peace in Europe was actually the hope of the wise Queen of England. By her tact and guidance these relationships in the royalty of Europe were extended. They included the wonderful relationship of the House of Coburg-Gotha, of the Wittellsbach, of the Hessians. In fact, it extended to Roumania, Bulgaria, Greece, Denmark and Russia. Who would have believed that the twentieth century would become an abyss where all sentiment has been unavoidably drowned, swallowed up in the horror of war?

The Princess Royal, the eldest daughter of Queen Victoria, who married German royalty, inherited the tendency of her mother for jealousy. There

are many stories told confirming this fact. It is said that when she lived at the palace in Berlin during the first year of her marriage, she ran out of the palace one night, hatless, a short distance across the palace grounds, to complain to her mother-in-law, the Kaiserin Augusta, that she had just seen a wonderful parure of jewels which was being sent to the greatest prima donna of her time by her royal and beloved husband. It is said that the Kaiserin Augusta told her that such little things occurred so often in the sphere of royalty, she must become accustomed to them. The English princess went back to her palace home, still crying, but more reconciled to the fact that all men are untrustworthy. This may have been a crisis in her perception of royal privileges, for her after life was a most happy one.

I remember vividly the day when the present Kaiser was born. I was only a little girl and belonged to one of the church choirs which Her Royal Highness patronised. I can see her now with the Kaiser entering the *salon* where we children stood waiting for them. I can see her showing us the war lord looking like a baby cherub in her arms. The royal parents were just as proud as any other ordinary parents, and especially one felt how won-

Madame Frédéric

You are hereby appointed

Dressmaker & Milliner

to Her Majesty The Queen.

To hold this Royal Warrant so long as shall seem fit to the Lord Chamberlain to Her Majesty for the time being.

Given under my hand and seal this sixth day of March 1911

This Warrant is strictly personal and is to be returned in the event of any thing taking place in the Firm from Lady Milliner or other cause and may not be copied or reproduced in any way.

Shaftesbury

Lord Chamberlain.

ERTIFICATE GRANTED BY QUEEN MARY

Her Majesty Queen Mary sent her "Lord Chamberlain" (Lord Shaftesbury) to bring personally her appointment to the author—the first lady to receive from the Queen of England and Great Britain this appointment as her dressmaker.

derfully attached to each other they were. It was one of the most bewitching pictures one can imagine. It was the fashion then to wear crinolines, and I recall how difficult it was for her Imperial Highness to squeeze through the ample portieres.

The simplicity of the Victorian Court frequently placed her Imperial Highness after her marriage to Kaiser Friedrich in embarrassing positions. Her Ladies-in-Waiting, in Berlin, stood aghast one day when she requested one of them to bring in a tea pot and kettle. The Court etiquette in Germany was much more formal and strict than it was in England. When the Lady-in-Waiting did not obey the royal command, her Imperial Highness turned smilingly and said:

"If Queen Victoria can make her own tea, surely the Crown Princess of Prussia can do the same."

She was most informal, most charitable, very clever and industrious. The little covering of the cradle of the present Kaiser was entirely embroidered by her on white satin with the escutcheon of the Hohenzollerns. Many people must recall how all England rejoiced when Queen Victoria heard of the birth of her eldest grandson, the present Kaiser. The event was made a holiday for the masses and for all classes. No one was more de-

voted to the Crown Princess of Germany than her brother, the Prince of Wales, who gave her away at the wedding. He was entirely devoted to her.

I still remember that royal wedding day in Berlin. It was a cold, snowy, icy day. The triumphal arch was covered with snow and ice flowers. It was a wonderful background. The royal couple, driving slowly along in their carriage, were preceded by a few sweet girls who, on that cold day, dressed in thin muslin dresses, threw bouquets of flowers in front of the horses. Their enthusiasm kept them warm, for when the baskets were empty they threw them through the carriage windows.

In the intervening years the lives of royalty went on in the usual torpid way, and a large family grew up,—a family which includes Prince Henry of Prussia, the Queen of Greece, Princess of Langenburg Hesse, and one son, Prince Waldemar, who died in his early youth.

No one was more popular or intimate with the present Kaiser than the late British Ambassador, Sir Edward Malet, and Lady Ermyntrude Malet in Berlin. The Kaiser usually spent an hour every day at the British Embassy. Lady Ermyntrude Malet was one of the most intellectual women in the diplomatic family. She was the daughter of

the Duke of Bedford, one of the richest Dukes in England. Her mother, the Duchess of Bedford, was one of the bridesmaids at the wedding of Her Majesty Queen Victoria. She spent almost a king's ransom for her wonderful jewels and laces, many of which came down through generations of the Bedford family.

So the blood ties between the royalties of England and Germany seemed to grow closer and surer in sentiment of good will as the years went by. The present Queen of England, Queen Mary, still perpetuates this close relationship, being the daughter of the Duke of Teck and the Duchess of Teck, who were closely related to the Royal House of Wurtemberg. The mother of the Duke of Teck was the daughter of a Hungarian land owner. She was wooed by the father of the Duke of Teck, and was considered one of the most beautiful women of her time. The Duchess of Teck was one of the most popular women of England, not only with the Court, but especially with the people themselves. She was a cousin of King Edward. It was once expected that she would inherit the throne, as her mother, the Duchess of Kent, and her brother, the Duke of Cambridge, were the direct descendants of the Kents.

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LOVE STORIES OF COURT BEAUTIES

LOVE STORIES OF COURT BEAUTIES

CHAPTER I

COURT BEAUTIES OF THE SECOND EMPIRE

I LOVE to dwell upon this period of my life in France because it was the preparatory stage in the career of the House of Frédéric. It brings back to me also such wonderfully unique experiences, such brilliant incidents. Those were the times when Napoleon III and the beautiful Empress Eugénie congregated at Compiègne. Around them gathered the pleasure-loving and exquisite society of the period. At Compiègne, during the hunting season, it was very picturesque to see them assembled in their bottle-green hunting costumes. The women wore riding habits with long sweeping trains, cavalier coats, jabots of real lace, and the three-cornered hats, edged with ostrich plumes.

Napoleon III, after making a triumphal tour of the Courts of Europe as a prospective bridegroom,

returned from his adventures unsuccessful. He was unable to realise his ambition, for wherever he knocked at the door of these royal palaces he received a polite refusal,—and finally he came to Spain, where he met Madame de Montjoy, the mother of La Belle Eugénie. Mademoiselle de Montjoy was, I believe, at the time of her marriage, already twenty-eight years of age, and of marvellous beauty. Exceptional was her hair, coils upon coils of auburn tresses formed a halo to her oval face full of vivacity. Her eyes were a violet blue, and the discreet long lashes gave her the appearance of a modern madonna. I do not remember ever having seen a more perfect woman. She was terribly ambitious to grace the throne of France, which she achieved, and then, as the Empress Eugénie, she became an epoch-making woman.

It was the Empress who made Paris the city of luxury, of abundant pleasure. It was she who made it the rendezvous of the world. It was she who induced the great architect, Baron Housmann, to build the beautiful Boulevard Housmann, and the delightful Avenue de l'Opéra, where the first great electric lamps shed their brilliancy to show the contrast with the gas lamps of former days.

Eugénie loved colour and light, gaiety and perpetual life. She possessed the power to mentally intoxicate her surroundings, her companions. Young and old followed where she led. It was a marvellous sight to see her driving in her open *barouche* drawn by four beautiful stallions. Thousands of spectators awaited her coming to cheer her as she passed, and to enjoy her bewitching and ingratiating smile. Her *toilettes* were wonderful, she had a great deal of personal taste, and her original colour schemes were adopted by Worth.

What an empire she ruled.

She has loved much, she has suffered much, she has borne everything bravely. When the American doctor who saved her from a hideous fate brought this proud and ambitious woman to England, where she found a home, Queen Victoria graciously extended hospitality and sympathy to her for the loss of her Empire, her husband, and her son. No wonder France has at last awakened to the sincere regard which the British Empire has always had for Frenchmen.

To-day the Ex-Empress Eugénie is beautiful to look at. She still walks erect, she is still surrounded by some of her devoted friends. Her English home in Farnborough is very beautiful, and her goal of

pilgrimage daily is to the mausoleum of her husband and son.

It was the Empress Eugénie who created for Worth his world-wide prestige. He was made the arbiter of fashion, the entire aristocracy went to him. He amassed a colossal fortune and built himself a wonderful castle at Surenne near Paris, filled with exquisite things. It was sumptuous and at the same time very comfortable. The House of Worth still flourishes, the business being conducted by his grandson. Worth was an Englishman. His wife was a beautiful woman, and was very much admired by one of those Russian *grandées* who often come to Paris to be charmed and to charm. There are two events in my life in Paris during the Second Empire which I shall not forget. One was the pageant reception at the Tuileries, and the other was a glimpse of the Empress Eugénie at the races in Longchamps.

The scene at the Tuileries was a sight for the gods. When the Empress Eugénie faced that wonderful blaze of light and beauty, leaning on the arm of Napoleon III, a breathless silence prevailed. The crowds gasped with admiration, as if they were watching some exquisite apparition. She was surrounded by her galaxy of fair women. They

stood upon a raised dias of royal blue. Napoleon III looked almost as tall as herself. The music of the orchestra was by Gounod and Meyerbeer. I have never forgotten a single detail of her gown. It was so attractive and so well thought out that it impressed itself forever upon my mind. It was a satin Duchess robe in an oyster-shell tone, richly and profusely embroidered, with a stole of *tulle Arabesque* bordered with precious stones, held up with *agrafes* of diamonds, a slight hoop skirt or crinoline showing an ample skirt, leaving a very small train from the hips. A Dalmatian mantle of *bleu ardoise* (steel blue) in Lyons velvet was slung from under the arms a length of over four yards, which had enormous bunches of *violets de Parmes* and *mignonette* embroidered in relief with floss silk. The effect was marvellous and more than beautiful. Two pages carried this masterpiece of the dressmakers' arts at least three feet behind her, to allow the whole creation to be seen from every nook and corner of the assembly. Her crown of brilliants of the purest Brazilian lustre, in great spikes, standing upwards, tipped with huge black pearls and dew-drops of diamond *chaînettes,* from the centre of that crown, were fastened to the train with three Persian turquoises, big as a hen's egg. Her fan

was curiously interesting. It was of real *point de Gauze,* and the sticks were entirely of brilliants, with her monogram and imperial crown of diamonds, turquoises, sapphires and topaz, which hung from her girdle.

The Court dress of Napoleon was the simple "dress clothes" of to-day, a wide blue ribbon across his shirt bosom, a huge star of brilliants on the left lapel of his coat. He was very dignified, almost stern, yet a little smile would linger on his lips, when some homage was paid him. The Duke de Bassano, Monsieur Pietri, the Chef de Police, the Duke de Magenta, Prince Sagan, with his charming princess, General Gallifet and his more than lovely wife, Prince and Princess Paul Metternich, La Belle Laide (so baptised by Napoleon) were all there.

Her Imperial Highness, Empress Eugénie, fully appreciated the volatile nature, the romance and sparkle of the French people. I remember once at the races at Longchamps, the enthusiasm with which the Empress told me what a striking and beautiful creature she found the lovely Baruchi was to look at. She was a glorious brunette, Italian by birth, the dear friend of Prince Murat. She appeared on this occasion in a black princess

robe of *Chantilly* over *cerise peau de soie,* a lace skirt, a little parasol to match, cerise silk stockings embroidered in black, suède shoes with silver buckles, and the tiniest hat. Her carriage was lined with crimson, and black buttons. The footmen wore a livery of crimson and black.

I shall never forget the picture of the Empress Eugénie herself on that eventful Sunday at Longchamps. She appeared in a robe of turquoise taffeta all flounced to the waist, trimmed with tiny narrow blue Sèvres ribbons edging the flounces; a white mantilla of Spanish lace, a hat of Italian straw, trimmed with bunches of corn flowers and forget-me-nots. She was universally admired as she drove up in the Imperial carriage drawn by four horses with postillion outriders, Napoleon III at her side, and Prince Lulu and General Fleury, the Adjutant, facing her. It seems only yesterday, so freshly is the picture imprinted on my mind.

What a background the delightful Bois de Boulogne made, on the borders of the lake!

Those were days of continual gaiety, of historical illuminations and grand balls. Who will forget that gala night at the opera, when the Czar of Russia was visiting Paris? It was during this visit that some madman shot at the Emperor in the

Bois de Boulogne. What a commotion, and how well I remember the indignation of the French people! Yet he was present at the opera that night. The programme was "L'Africaine." That was the day when Lasalle was the world's famous basso, and Madame Sachs was the prima donna of the evening. What a tremendous shout of enthusiasm greeted the Emperor of Russia when he entered the royal box with Napoleon III and Empress Eugénie, surrounded by their courtiers!

"Vive le Czar, vive l'Impératrice."

The noise was deafening. All degrees and classes of people mingled together courteously, *pro tem*, at that wonderful operatic event. For a time they forgot their old feuds, their positions, their ambitions. The harmony of Meyerbeer's music, the glorious voices of the great prima donna and basso, made even these Potentates human. The charm of that elaborate, marvellous assembly must still be vivid in the memory of many now living, who had the pleasure and advantage to see it.

All the world came to Paris, and whenever the Imperial couple drove out in public, they were surrounded by cavalry. The constant attendant of

Empress Eugénie was Major Johnstone, who stood six feet four. Every one adored him, he was all but worshipped. His station was always near the boudoir of Her Imperial Majesty, and, of course, scandal deftly tried to embarrass this idyl. The Empress was quite able to take care of her reputation, however, and when her only son, Prince Lulu, as he was called, came into the limelight, such matters were forgotten. Undesirables flocked to Paris, swayed upon the threshold of society but never could enter the precincts. Huge sums were paid by the *Rastaquères* to get a glimpse of the social paradise, but Eugénie was exclusive, and if in her youth she had not been quite so particular, it must be laid at the door of her mother's generosity, who always wanted to befriend the cavaliers who were blessed with the Golden Fleece, the greatest order in Spain. In her early days, before her marriage, the Empress enjoyed the freedom of the Spanish nobility, with glee and zest.

France was a paradise of all that art and luxury could procure in the Second Empire. When the war of '70 broke out, it was Her Imperial Highness who called it "my war," which called forth the following verses in Germany:—

"Doch das eine must du wissen,
Márk dires wenn es dir beliebt
Das der Schwindel hier zu Ende
Wenn's am Rhine Keile giebt."

Such were the words accredited from the Emperor of France to the Empress Eugénie.

Another great historic event of the Second Empire was the celebration opening the Suez Canal, at which their Imperial Majesties, Napoleon III and Empress Eugénie, were the inspiring figures. I remember distinctly the celebrated Monsieur de Lesseps, who, standing with his lovely Créole wife, was decorated with the ribbon of the Legion of Honour. Having created this colossal engineering feat, if Monsieur de Lesseps had only halted there! Then, the fiasco of Panama would never have been possible.

This occasion was *"la folie de grandeur."* Her Imperial Majesty Empress Eugénie absorbed all interest, lending a natural charm and grace to the historical importance of this gigantic enterprise. All clamoured to do her homage. The wonderful festivities, the illuminations at night, the fireworks, were upon a scale which fairly beggars description.

Many of those wonderful women of the Second Empire had not survived the years as well as the

beautiful Empress Eugénie. And yet there were many ravishing beauties to remember.

It was Napoleon III who christened the Princess Pauline Metternich, *La Belle Laide.* She was one of the many women of the Second Empire who understood the art of dress to perfection. The Princess Metternich was small, piquant, wonderfully *spirituelle* in appearance, which belied her otherwise rather caustic and ready wit. This gift of satire often placed her in very awkward positions, yet she managed to extricate herself at all times valiantly. She was famous for her repartée. Her *toilettes* were proverbially regarded as inspiring, her smart turnout, her thoroughbred horses, were all of the finest. She was very popular at the Imperial Court. She was formerly Countess Chandos, and her brother distinguished himself by the marvellous feat of swimming the Danube on horseback.

Then there was the tall and graceful Madame Gallifet, who created a style all her own. She was the wife of the celebrated General Gallifet. She was a famous horsewoman, a sparkling conversationalist, and a power at the Imperial Court that everyone recognised. Although she was extremely popular, she was exclusive to a degree. Her *salons*

were the vogue, and all the society of Paris at that period was very anxious to be asked to her intimate receptions. It was Madame Gallifet who originated a witticism that has since been used by dramatists and wits.

To the old Marquis de N—— she said:

"Why do you not marry the Duchess de C——?"

"My dear Madame, where do you imagine, in that case, I could spend my evenings?" he replied.

Madame Gallifet startled the Paris fashions by the daring of her gowns, for which nature had amply fitted her. The celebrated Worth was her favourite dressmaker. We have not been able to improve upon the artistic designs which Worth created for these exquisite women of the Second Empire.

The tailor-made woman had scarcely arrived at this time, and therefore, it is perhaps safe to say that the Marquise d'Elboeuf, later the Duchess de Morny, was the first mannish type of the nineteenth century. Her brother emphasised her masculine tendencies by a story told of him at the club. In a burst of enthusiasm one evening, and of pardonable vanity, he made the following confidence to a friend:

"My sister and myself," he said, "have known intimately the most beautiful women in Paris."

The Paris of long ago enjoyed its gaiety in true Parisian quality. To the rest of the world this may have seemed occasionally scandalous, but to Paris it was mere harmless exuberance of wit. Paris was extravagant in the days of the Second Empire.

At a certain exclusive club in Paris the beautiful "Isabelle" sold buttonhole bouquets at fabulous prices. A hundred francs for a gardenia, fifty francs for a rosebud, twenty-five francs for a bunch of violets. She retired with a fortune of a million francs. The *gallants* of the period would never dream of appearing at the race-track without wearing one of "Isabelle's" *boutonnières.* With a black lace mantilla draped over her handsome head, a plain black cashmere princess gown that displayed her wonderful figure, everybody in the *grande monde* talked to her, told her little tidbits of scandal, challenged her in conversation. "Isabelle" was typical of Paris of the Second Empire.

The Magnificent homes on the Champs Élysée in Paris all had their romances of one sort or another. None was more sumptuous or extravagant than the palace of the Princess Henkel-Donnersmark.

Her career was romantic, her presence glorious, her extravagance indescribable. Millions were lavished upon the artistic and elaborate interior of her home. It was truly gorgeous.

Princess Henkel-Donnersmark was formerly Madame de Paiva. She was Polish, tall, with real blue-black hair, and those wonderful liquid brown-black eyes, very large and luminous. She was distinctly Oriental in type, and being conscious of the power of her eyes, she painted blue circles around them, and inspired them with belladonna, which gave them a lustre that held one spellbound. Her ideas were barbaric, but she was always gowned to perfection. Being Oriental in taste, she wore wonderful jewels. Her rubies, emeralds and sapphires reminded one of the glories of Cleopatra. She usually wore trailing robes, and as her movements were serpentine, she was christened in Paris the "Cobra." Her star of fortune had not always been brilliant. The early years of her life had been somewhat mysterious. The story was told of her that when she first came to Paris she was so poor that she was literally starving. On the very ground where she built her sumptuous home on the Champs Élysée, she had been found sitting one day upon a little wooden bench, hungry

and forlorn. The Prince Charming of her career, a gentleman, approached her and charitably offered her his protection and a meal. Her rise in the world became notorious, because she was famous for an extravagance that rivalled that of the Byzantine Empresses.

I have visited her home, which contained gorgeous mosaics, and was built of marble. It was filled with the most wonderful pictures and works of art. It was rumoured in Paris that she was the political agent of one of the most influential Empires. How true this was, no one knew. The Malachite marble staircase, the bathroom lined with real lace over gold and turquoise, her bedroom and boudoir, sumptuously furnished with Smyrna carpets and Kurdistan rugs, gave these rooms an impression of a harem. There was neither a chair nor a sofa anywhere in them, only the most beautiful cushions of all tints of the rainbow, placed around low *tabourets.* The rooms were in perpetual artificial light of a rose and mauve coloured shade. The effect of all this weird atmosphere of course enhanced the beauty of this gorgeous woman. When I knew her, she had long passed her zenith, yet she still ruled her husband with an iron hand and many friends besides. This magnificent home of hers in

Paris was subsequently sold, and became a very smart restaurant, but without much success.

The first time the Princess Henkel-Donnersmark received me was in a sort of lounge-room adjoining her bath. The Princess was wearing a gown as diaphanous as cobweb; she gave the impression of Venus rising from her bath in draperies of trailing foam. Her bath itself was a revelation. Instead of the usual pool, there was a font or huge vase of clearest crystal bound with copper, studded with turquoise. The water which poured from this font was perfumed, and in this huge vase of perfumed water the Princess would sit for hours, while in three corners around her were gold chalices also set with turquoise in which burned incenses of India. There were a succession of baths, Turkish, Russian and others. Of course, I was overcome with the magnificence of her surroundings. Although it was real, I had to pinch myself to be convinced that the Princess, when she addressed me in Polish, was really a modern human being. Her manner was very autocratic.

"O, dear," she said, "please call my valet and my maid."

I was told it was her custom to receive the members of the diplomatic corps in Paris, the celebrated

Bohemians, the artists of France, in a similar diaphanous gown. My conversation with her was confined, however, to the burning question of the day,—the Princess' new gowns. It is interesting to recall what we decided upon. One dress was of scarlet Lyons velvet, trimmed with chinchilla, and a cloak to match. This was an afternoon dress. Another was an evening gown of Duchess satin, embroidered with jet and gold intermingled with pearls, and trimmed with marten fur tails. Her mantle was of Peruvian chinchilla trimmed with Russian ermine.

She sleeps,—forgiven let us hope,—this modern Aspasia and Magdalen. Her house is now a dressmaker's establishment, being transferred from a temple of love to a temple of fashion.

Emil Zola's novel of "Nana" may be almost forgotten to-day, but in its time it was a very faithful picture of one of the beauties of the Second Empire. I knew this beautiful woman who was the original inspiration of the great French author for this character. She was very graceful, tall, blonde, by name Blanche l'Oeil Crévée. She was tremendously admired, so much so that she had very little time for her art, because she was such a vogue. She understood the joy of living as Pari-

sians understood it then. The dinner parties she gave at the Café Anglais, surrounded by men who laid their fortunes, but not their names, at her feet, were celebrated. She did not seem to care much for their names, or for themselves for that matter, as long as she could sup, and dine, and dress. She was a goddess of pleasure, and her life was one perpetual round of emotion. She flashed upon the life of Paris like a comet, and like a comet she went. Zola alone immortalised her idealism.

It was at this period that Teresa, the woman with the man's voice, the most famous contralto of her time, puzzled me very much as a dressmaker. Her favourite colours were pale blue and green, and she always wanted the richest satins if possible. Her *décolletage* was outrageous, but she was a great Alcazar favourite in Paris. I think she still lives the simple life, on a chicken farm. From the sublime to the ridiculous is only a step. Teresa was, as one great artist described her to me, the most fascinating, but the most intensely vulgar personality, of the French stage. She was as celebrated and popular in Paris as Nellie Farren was in London.

She was of a type of stage beauty who led the

young, unsophisticated aristocracy to worship at her shrine, without fear, but with many reproaches. The Duc D'Aumale was an enormous admirer of hers, and the little café near St. Cloud was an adorable retreat.

Who will forget that delightful mimic, Judic, who startled Paris in her famous bathing costume, escorted by the jovial Baron, as her bathing-master. She was unique in her *toilettes,* which were indeed very daring, and yet never crude or vulgar. Judic began as a variety singer at the Eldorado; suddenly she blossomed forth one day as a prima donna in opera at the Théâtre Varietée on the Boulevard de Montmartre. She sang very well, but her vivacity, and her more than *décolleté* songs, created an immense *furore.* Judic was dark, of the Oriental type, inclined to be stout. She wore skirts as short as possible, inviting the crowd to "come and see more of me."

Most of the French actresses aped the style and manners of the *grandes dames.* This was cleverly satirised in one of Offenbach's *opéra bouffes* called "La Vie Parisienne."

But, Paris in 1867 outrivalled every other city in the world, in pleasure, in wit, in *toilettes.*

A *bal masque* given at the Grand Opera House

in Paris just before the war of 1870, was the final whirl of this maddening Paris before the shadows settled over her. I remember a famous Russian Grand Duchess who appeared in the costume of "Sappho." When it came time for her to leave her box, which had been continually surrounded by a curious crowd, it was necessary to call the police to make room for her to pass out,—to allow Venus to go home.

These recollections of Paris at this time are so full of interesting people and events, that we were obliged to run away from it to recuperate. So, the winter of 1868 found myself and my husband installed in a villa at Monte Carlo, the paradise or inferno of Europe, whichever you care to make it.

It was at Monte Carlo I met the beautiful American girl, Fanny Lear. Her affair with an Imperial Grand Duke was an international scandal. The superb pearls, rubies and sapphires which were showered upon her by the Grand Duke, were discovered afterwards to be the personal jewels of his royal mother, for which little lapse of etiquette he was exiled from the Czar's domain for a long time. The Grand Duke's influence evidently left its impression upon Fanny Lear after their

BARONESS DE RAMELM AND HER DAUGHTERS AT THE SWEDISH EMBASSY

The Swedish ladies of the Court, Countess Lewenhaupt and the Baroness de Ramelm, charming, modest ladies, gowned in perfect taste, who accomplished a renovation in social matters in England.

separation, for her gowns were always purely Russian in style, heavily trimmed with jewels and embroidery, which greatly enriched her peculiar Oriental beauty. I am not sure whether originally she came from Philadelphia or from one of those charming cities in the Southern states. She had beautiful eyes, glorious hair of a nut-brown shade, and teeth like pearls, but when showing them in a ravishing smile, one saw a rather cruel and cynical mouth. She was intelligent far above the average. Our conversation, which usually began on the absorbing topic of woman's gowns, drifted along to beauty, poetry, wit, till it was time to say "good night." I remember meeting her at a grand reception given by one of our celebrated actresses, in a gown that no one could ever forget. It was an opal-coloured royal satin, profoundly trimmed with Borano lace, a *corsage* covered with real opals, and strings of black pearls, to complete this ravishing *toilette*. Her cloak was a regal wrap of Russian sable, entirely trimmed with rose *miroire* velvet. Sumptuous in every way were these women of the last century, and they did not seem to care whether it was their own money or some one else's. It was the age of vampires in a measure, and many of them, alas, finished badly.

In Paris we met, one evening at supper, that wonderful *artiste,* Princess Marie Eristoff, Mounet Sully and the Prince, and many other celebrities. The Princess took a fancy to me, and made quite a lovely crayon drawing of me. She was wonderfully quick, and in three hours I took this spontaneous memento back to my hotel. She was extremely lovely, with ashen blonde hair, and very slender, eyes like chameleon, always changing, a voice like a rippling fall of water, perfectly modulated and a trifle sad. In after years we met by chance through a mutual acquaintance, a Brazilian beauty, Parola de Paranguay, and so renewed an old friendship. Princess Marie Eristoff came to London and painted my portrait life size. Every one who saw it pronounced it a perfect likeness although perhaps it is a little idealistic and *futuristique* in influence. She exhibited it at the Waldorf with some others of her works, portraits of Prince George of Servia, Sacha Votischenkow, the great Russian Tymphan artist, a Russian dancer, and others. I hear she is now in great demand, and is painting the portraits of many of the brothers, sons and sweethearts, in khaki, for those loved ones left behind, and that most of her fees are turned over at once to charity, which is like her generous heart.

Her *atelier* in Paris was often filled with Russian grand dukes and duchesses from the embassy, who like the flavour of Bohemia. And we used to drink coffee from an earthen Roman pitcher, and eat black bread with butter from a broken earthenware saucer. Spellbound we would listen to the weird music of the Tymphan, and one of her favourites, that Sacha was often called upon to play, was an imaginary storm on the Volga. Sacha, too, is now in this country, and only before his departure from England he had the honour of playing before Queen Alexandra, Grand Duchess Marie and the Princess Victoria. When I recall the days of these famous men and women, notorious perhaps too often, one wonders that the twentieth century is so void of all these perpetual, piquant incidents. We have progressed indeed, but have we perhaps not deteriorated, too, in some things.

The enchantress of the Second Empire was, in a primitive sense, less regardless than the modern "flapper," who so mysteriously defies us. The Court romances of the Second Empire were distinctly more humane and graceful than those of a later Court, across the sea from France.

Napoleon III had a streak of vulgarity, a taint of the cad in him. It often happens that men who

are able in warfare and diplomacy, in their dealings with women are unpardonable. He lacked the gift of reticence towards his affairs with women. Nothing could have been more disreputable than the sordid and cruel delight in the tone with which he discusses his opportunities of escape from serious responsibilities with Madame R——, a lady of his Court. She had been *persona grata* with the Imperial family, the confidante of the Empress, and the victim of all the grievances that Her Imperial Majesty could imagine. Sometimes the ladies of the Court of the Second Empire pursued a thought of unavoidable feeling of justice towards the beautiful Empress Eugénie. That is to say, they accepted the presents of the Emperor Napoleon, and kept faith in vital things with the Empress.

The story is told of the famous Madame de P——, who was greatly admired by the Emperor, that she was invited by him to the Tuileries Palace to inspect the royal apartment. When the Emperor led her to the bedroom of the Empress, she turned to His Imperial Majesty and gracefully disarmed him.

"I cannot admire fully," she said, "the exquisite conveniences of this room in the absence of Her Majesty, the chief ornament."

Napoleon had no adequate reply to such adroitness, and so he sent a gentleman to the Empress, requesting her to come at once and acknowledge her indebtedness to Madame de P——.

That was Napoleon III in his best romantic mood. It was not always the attitude of Madame de P., however. She managed to amass many valuable jewels, and to hide them from her husband. Napoleon's attraction towards her was not irresistible, because he had little personal charm, but Madame de P. could not be entirely blind to the material advantages gained by an affair with the Emperor. It is recorded that she gave her affection and fidelity to her Imperial mistress, the Empress. As a woman, inevitably subject to flattery, Madame de P. was no doubt pleased by the romantic homage of Napoleon. The heart of the Empress Eugénie was no doubt disturbed with bitterness that comes to the woman who is childless, her ambition also may have inspired her with a desire for an heir apparent. These are merely observations of analysis, without actual fact in history. Commentators of her time accused her of being lethargic, others believed that she was unwilling. No one has solved the mystery of how she spent her quiet moments.

Strive as we will, to study the inner character of the Empress Eugénie from the many portraits, we cannot decide whether she was happy or unhappy. Those portraits of her, made in the earlier years of her reign, give a very benign expression. There is a great change in those portraits taken of her during the years when she was in her zenith, when the obsessions of power had brought a slight cynical weariness, to mark her features. Were the eyes of the Empress cynical? In these portraits of her famous years, they are full and open, looking with an air of tolerable candour on the world, yet with an expression in her elevated eyebrows, of question. In the later portraits, owing perhaps to the fashion of the sidelong, averted gaze and exaggerated rouging, to the portrait painter's custom of giving beautiful women the delicate, tapering hands, we must perhaps allow for the artistic convention of the period, yet, these portraits speak clearly for the nervous refinement of this wonderful woman.

She moved amidst the *dramatis personæ* inscrutably. She was especially inscrutable to the unscrupulous politician, that genius, that picturesque personality, streaked with facts which one encounters in human nature as one does in geological formations. Those who feared her hated her,

and their hatred, bred of common minds, was a greater homage to her than their love. She was always hopeful of any episode which might provide a clue to some new intrigue of the court. She was complex, ardent, facing the future with some definite plan that she did not declare.

The satirical wits of the Court, unable to penetrate her motive, described her as an emotional lobster salad. There were many in the Court of the Second Empire, however, with fine personalities, who, like Her Imperial Majesty, moved untouched amid the evil of that Empire. Napoleon's *amours* were treated with mild, yet jealous intolerance by his consort. Mild, chiefly because, though these episodes were picturesquely brilliant, they were hollow.

The Princess Pauline Metternich retained her beauty and her wit after sixty years of coquetry and social reign. She was not so beautiful but she was sprightly, gay, full of character and electric charm.

The Princess de S. was really beautiful, with her fair hair and complexion, and rounded figure. The beauty of her face was almost angelic, she had pearl-white skin, blue eyes, and her hair looked like gold, cooled in moonlight. Such was the princess

in her early youth. Her intellectual brilliancy involved her in politics, for it was at her house that those famous parties were held which were regarded with so much disfavour by the legitimist faction. It is stated that she secretly married a brilliant roué, to legitimize her amatory discrepancies. It was noticeable that the Emperor treated her with far more reserve and respect than he generally accorded to the ladies whose society he frequented. She frequently drove out in public with the Imperial couple, and when she left France for Spain they accompanied her. When she died, it caused great distress to every one, and especially to myself, due to the honour which she had extended to me on my arrival at Court. Besides her many other perfections which made her admirable, she possessed that one of being a loyal friend.

"I shall revere her memory and mourn her all my days," were the words of the Empress Eugénie when the Princess de S. died.

As the old harem days of Napoleon's reign pass from our vision, there is a unique fact in the knowledge that some of the men who surrounded him had such a horror of impropriety that it is surprising they should have been there at all. However, Napoleon III was always scrupulously correct in

good manners. Still, the liberty and licence of the Court invite the curious question as to which of these men who were so insistent for the proprieties, was the greatest fraud.

There is a piquant story told of a certain Court lady, a Spanish beauty, who in every detail of feminine perfection seriously rivalled the Empress Eugénie. Many at Court hated her, for she interfered quite seriously with their own affairs with the Emperor. It was generally admitted that his sentiments towards this lady were very sincere, so much so, that he carried her letters constantly with him.

By a conspiracy of the Empress and her Court ladies, she was finally entirely frightened away from the Court balls. It was a very simple plan. Whenever she arrived, looking radiantly beautiful, the Court ladies would get around her and tell her how ill she was looking, until being convinced that she was not looking her best, she would run out of the *salon* before the Emperor could see her, entirely duped by the mischief of these Court ladies.

One of the really daring beauties of the Court of the Second Empire was Madame d'Elboeuf. She was not very tall, but striking, and she exacted admiration, awaited love at every turn. Her fore-

head needed no device of curls, her lips were rather too thin, but her teeth were beautiful, and she was regarded by able sculptors as a figure worthy of classical beauty to rank with the creations of the sculptors of Rome and Greece. She was brazenly intolerant of virtue in other women, which she regarded as improbable and perhaps impossible.

I must give a passing word to two women, who, though not in the Court circles, were so famous for their beauty, their mental vivacity and promiscuous adventures, as to be typical of the women of the Second Empire. They were both respectably born. Blanche d'I——, one of these women, was the daughter of a man of the world and a distinctly pious mother. Brown-eyed, laughter loving, yet not suggestive of mere bubbling mirth, she always had a rather severe, haughty expression. She had many adorers, shared many intrigues. Her contemporary, Anne Delyon, was a being of inferior calibre. She was much admired by the Duke de Morny. She would accept gifts of any sort, clothes, bric-a-brac, anything that had value, and she talked with pride of the important men who had supplied them. She frequently visited a certain Grand Duke, dressed as a page, and displayed his costly gifts with much self-congratulation. The

partner of her earlier aberrations was a decadent poet of the Second Empire, whom she really loved. But then, she really loved only seven men after all, so she averred in the recital of her book, "Libre Amoris."

The names of these two women were chronicled among the Court babblers of the Imperial era.

On every page of record in gallantry, in intrigue or diplomatic episodes of this period, one will find some allusion to the brilliant Princess R., with a man's intellect diverted by a woman's caprice. She was ever beguiling, even in her most indifferent moments. Her husband, the prince, though stern in appearance, looked on at her affairs with the admiration one may feel for the gambols of a lovely kitten, but who became adamant when he found that she was interfering with the serious affairs of state. Her sprightly activities made the dull atmosphere of other neglected Court ladies brighter. Her attachment to her various *beaux* outlived many vicissitudes, and the princess, in a way that was careless and self-seeking, did her best. Perhaps, after all, she only used her powers to form a cover for her own romances. Her affair with the English Duke of H. was only a blind, for the princess favoured her English lover, so they say, and

dared almost everything. When visiting a certain country house, the prince wished her to leave with him but she refused. She was not herself quite sure of her hospitality, but she did not wish to give the world the impression that her only home was her husband's.

She was often on the brink of disgrace but always escaped. In her resplendent womanhood she captivated every one. After the fall of the Empire she was implicated in some clandestine correspondence with the Empress. In these letters she informed Her Imperial Majesty that a certain Archbishop would do anything for her, if she favoured him. It was not discovered that the prelate was really deeply in the toils of the enchantress, but he did provide her means to get out of France. Dressed as a man, she set off with a couple of horsemen as her sole escorts, but in her usual casual fashion left the evidence of her guilt behind. She was provided with ample means by an acquaintance whom she did not betray, for it might have been fatal to her incognito until she reached the frontier. She sent her lover a colossal sum, and promised him that when she died he should have her jewels. She had many adventures in Holland and Germany. It is said that on one of these expeditions, she

stopped at an inn in her man's disguise and slept on the floor with other men, undisturbed. The next morning she left a note for the stupefied landlord, which informed him that a princess had slept in his house.

I cannot leave this fascinating element of coquetry of the Second Empire without again referring to that delicate beauty, Madame de Gallifet. She will go down into history as a woman who in spite of her eagerness for life and all its enchantment, never was known to say an evil thing of any one. She is one of the rare figures in the picturesque tapestry of time. When she was a girl it was said that she knelt at the altar, praying that she might some night go to Court. She obtained her wish, she was enrolled as Maid of Honour, and it was on this occasion that her future husband saw her. He was a stiff and formal lover. For a long while he went no further than to express himself in flowery speech, and the dear girl began to feel that she had nothing to fear from him beyond the possibility of being bored. I have good cause to believe that she found great happiness in her married life.

That famous picture by Winterhalter, of the Empress Eugénie, surrounded by her group of fair

women, is typical of the Second Empire. It was so famous, that in after years proofs of it were sold for over a hundred thousand francs. I believe the original is in the Louvre.

Shortly after the war trumpet had sounded the call of duty, and the fall of the Second Empire had occurred, I was crossing on a channel steamer from Folkestone to Boulogne. The boat was extremely crowded and I had to stand up. A lady in deep mourning passed me. There was another lady with her, who, I later found out, was Madame de Faucourt. Both ladies, like myself, were wedged in so tightly, that they could not move. A sailor boy brought me a wooden stool, and the lady in deep mourning looked so longingly at it, that I quite unconsciously asked her to divide the seat with me. So for a little while we sat back to back. Presently she said to me in French:

"Madame, do you know a dance called the quadrille?"

"Yes," I said, and she half jestingly added that we were executing a figure of the quadrille.

Of course, later I learned it was the Empress, and I recalled to her the name of my aunt, whom she had known so well in her glorious days, and we chatted. When we arrived at Boulogne, the Em-

press got up, and as we bowed to each other she lifted her veil, then I bowed again and courtesied, and thanked her for the pleasant crossing, and she graciously extended me her hand, which I kissed. We went different ways, for I was going to Monte Carlo to meet my late husband, and she was going to Cap Martin, where she had a lovely villa.

I also met her later in those sublime shady walks on the Mediterranean. Between those olive and almond trees she would come slowly along, leaning rather heavily upon her stick, accompanied by her friend, the Duke de Bassano.

CHAPTER II

RECOLLECTIONS OF QUEEN VICTORIA

I SHALL never forget the dignity of Queen Victoria. It was most remarkable, because in stature and figure Her Majesty was by no means regal. There was an invulnerable air about her, a supreme consciousness of her royal person, that every one felt in her presence. I had the honour of meeting her many times, and I always marvelled at the mysterious atmosphere of royal identity which seemed to enfold the rather short, stout, plain little lady, who was England's wisest and most gracious Queen. She had the most perfect arms and hands of any woman I ever saw. Perhaps knowing this, she always wore beautiful gold bracelets, one of them bearing her late husband's miniature. On the other was an enormous cameo. Queen Victoria never adopted the style of her period of wearing bones in her bodice. In later years she used to wear one-piece gowns made by the silk mercers, always especially woven for her at Spittlefields. She

was perhaps the one Queen in Europe who never bought, or had made for her in the way of dress anything that was not English and ultra-conservative. All her gowns had long trains, and since the demise of the Prince Consort, her husband, she always wore black. I can only remember that on one or two occasions she relieved this sombre attire with a white plume, or a bunch of lilacs in her bonnet. Yet, she was every inch a Queen.

They did not study the form divine in 1830. Perhaps they didn't care to accentuate the curves and lines of the women of that period. At any rate, they dressed themselves like nice sofa cushions, hid their beauty of face in coal scuttle bonnets and huge shovel hats. The early Victorian *toilettes* in respect of *décolletage,* were perhaps not over-modest, still there were occasional restraints.

There was a strenuous effort in the Victorian Era, to establish the idea that there were none but honest women in England at that time. This impulse was inspired entirely by Queen Victoria herself, whose delicate, fastidious taste looked with horror upon any compromising act, not because of its indiscretion, but because it indicated a common mind. This may have been a chill of temperament which Her Majesty inherited. I am told that in

her youth she possessed a charm over all men who approached her that they could not ignore. After attracting them first by her youth and loveliness, she held their attention and admiration by her many remarkable qualities of conversation, of wit and brilliancy. When, however, any man attempted to cross the slender barrier which separates the courtier from the outspoken admirer, they found her surrounded by a wall of ice, impalpable, but impassible. The court ladies of Queen Victoria's early years were often filled with jealous envy towards the Queen. These women created some gossip but in spite of all they said, it is an indisputable fact that at no instant of her life was Queen Victoria's conduct anything but a transparent record of virtue.

Once only, it is said, did a man forget the respect due to his sovereign, and in fact to his own honour, as to yield to the temptation of acknowledging a devoted passion for the Queen. On this account, for a long time, the Duke of M. was banished from the Court. The story itself, I believe, was related by him.

It was on the night of a state ball, just after the Queen had been crowned, and being fatigued by the heat and glare of the drawing-rooms. Her Majesty

stepped out upon the terrace, illumined by the chaste radiance of a full moon. She was accompanied by the young Duchess of Bedford, who had been one of her bridesmaids. The Queen, clad from head to foot in snowy laces, with great emeralds gleaming on her white neck and in the masses of her beautiful hair, moved slowly up and down, close to the marble balustrade of the terrace. She was talking to her companion, in that melodious, low voice, which always had something so marvellously captivating about it. Presently she reached a secluded and shadowy corner of a long, rose-bowered walk, when suddenly, from beneath the trees, the Duke of M—— stepped out. It was evident from his manner that he had lost all control of his feelings. He cast himself at Her Majesty's feet and then and there confessed his earnest devotion. In the torrent of his eloquence, his unconsidered words were beyond all pardon. It is said that he clung to her skirts, his eyes sparkling like fire, his whole frame shaken with fierce emotion.

Her Majesty shook herself free, stared at him in amazement, then drew herself up and looked upon him as if he were some infuriated animal she wished to subdue. His Grace saw at once that she was implacably offended. It was probably the first and

the last time in her life that any one had ever presumed to insult her.

"How dare you!" she exclaimed, almost choking with fury. The Duke pursued his mad declaration, and of course found himself talking at last to the empty air, for the Queen moved away rapidly and re-entered the castle by a side door, leaving him blinded by his own emotions. It is said that he wandered around the gardens of Windsor Castle most of the night.

Nothing annoyed the Queen so much in her earlier years as to appear in public, to be stared at by the struggling crowds who tried to get as close to her as possible. To the common people her peculiar style of beauty was not comprehensible, it was a kind which had nothing gross or ordinary about it. Her wonderful ivory-like complexion, her erect, dignified bearing, were utterly foreign to the popular expectations in England of a Queen, and yet, no Queen on any throne of Europe ever deserved more credit for queenly dignity, not only of outward form, but also of inward character, than Queen Victoria.

Her one fault, perhaps, was a perfectly natural jealousy of her Consort, Prince Albert. The early years of Her Majesty's marriage were shockingly

unhappy, and when a woman is unhappy she is never wise. But England received the joyful tidings that Queen Victoria had been blessed with a son, Albert Edward, Prince of Wales. With the birth of this princelet all the bells of England rang out joyously, bonfires illuminated the landscape, and there began for Queen Victoria a long reign of unalloyed happiness, into which the yellow monster of jealousy never again intruded.

One could write volumes of the period during which the wonderful children of Queen Victoria were growing up to inherit their difficult destinies. Queen Victoria saw many sorrows come to these children, and sustained them with her quiet strength. Her daughter, the Princess Royal, who married Kaiser Friedrich, endured the same sorrows of widowhood as her mother, when the Emperor of Germany died. With all her children happily settled she spent the few remaining years of her widowhood in seclusion, the Kaiser and Prince Henry being her only surviving sons.

Queen Victoria's widowhood was particularly peaceful and remote from public appearances. She lived an ideal life with her widowed daughter, Princess Beatrice of Battenberg, partly in Balmoral, partly in the Isle of Wight. Princess Bea-

trice was created a governor of the Isle of Wight, and both she and her mother were adored by the people of this delightful place. The royal household was managed perhaps rather strictly, puritanically, but this did not affect the Battenberg children. They romped and played as other children, and their royal grandma was very human, very indulgent.

The question has often been asked if the Battenberg *ménage* was a happy one. It is still a query. At any rate, the Prince went away, and rumour said, it was because the Princess Beatrice had inherited much of her mother's characteristic jealousy. The Prince was an extraordinarily handsome man. Like all the Battenbergs, he had inherited from a morganatic mother, who was a rarely beautiful Jewess, much of her good looks and her intelligence. All the Battenbergs married well, for they were very popular and charming princes.

The first time I met Queen Victoria personally, I was summoned to Windsor Castle to be consulted concerning a new dress for Princess Beatrice. Of course, I went, and on my arrival found that the late Duchess of Roxborough, at that time Mistress of the Robes, had spoken of me to Princess Beatrice. Imagine my surprise when I was

informed that I was to make a purple velvet *toilette* for the young princess. Velvet, for one so young! It seemed very peculiar to me; however, I had to obey the royal command.

On my arrival at Windsor Castle, I was ushered into the royal boudoir. I particularly remember that, prominently displayed in the room, was a portrait of the late Prince Imperial, surrounded with great bunches of violets. Perhaps if he had lived an *entente cordiale* might have existed in the long ago.

It was during this first visit to Windsor Castle that I was initiated into the strict etiquette of the royal household. It was of course necessary for me, in my capacity as dressmaker, to stand side by side with Princess Beatrice. During my entire visit, however, Her Royal Highness never addressed me directly; she spoke to me, but in the third person. Her personal dresser was present, by name Morgan.

The princess would say to her dresser, for instance:

"Morgan, I should like you, please, to tell Madame Frédéric that I want my jacket and skirt very ample."

My reply, of course, was made to Miss Morgan,

but addressed to the princess. This, I believe, is the formal way of addressing exalted persons of royalty, even if they speak to you directly.

The purple velvet gown was made, trimmed with some glorious Russian sable, and successfully worn by Her Royal Highness. Princess Beatrice was at this time rather good looking. She was of the buxom type of beauty, to be sure, but she had a very charming smile, quantities of ash-blonde hair, good teeth, and a rather *distingué* air. She walked very gracefully. Her marriage to the late Prince Battenberg was, of course, an absolute love-match, and his early death upon foreign shores marred her happiness. She lost one of her favourite sons at the beginning of the war. Her daughter, however, is the Queen of Spain, and her grandchildren are much solace to her.

At the time I visited Windsor, Princess Beatrice had not yet married, for in her heart there was still the image of that importunate Prince Napoleon (Lulu), whose untimely death in Zululand was still fresh in the memory of all who had known him and loved him. Princess Beatrice never entirely lost the tender regard for this real romance of her life. It was always violets, the emblem of the Napoleonic family, which adorned her boudoir. And yet, the

closest ties of Princess Beatrice were naturally German.

Her daughter, the Queen of Spain, is German on her father's side. Alphonso, the King of Spain, is Austrian on his mother's side. In fact, there is not a single royal family in Europe that has not the blood of Germany somewhere in their veins. A glance at this relationship is worth while.

For instance, the Czarina of Russia was a Princess of Hesse Darmstadt. The Queen of Belgium is the daughter of a Bavarian prince. The King of Roumania is a direct descendant of the Hohenzollerns. The Queen of Roumania is the granddaughter of the late Queen Victoria. The Queen of Greece is the daughter of Kaiser Friedrich, another granddaughter of Queen Victoria, whose mother was the late Duchess of Connaught, daughter of the Red Prince Friedrich Carl of Prussia. The Queen of Holland is the daughter of the Duchess of Wied, her husband is the Grand Duke of Mecklenburg-Schwerin.

The royal servants of Windsor Castle during the latter part of Queen Victoria's reign were nearly all Germans. Her personal maid, who was with her for nearly forty years, came from a little hamlet in the Black Forest. Of course, there were a few

Scotch servants who surrounded Her Majesty. The tradespeople of the neighbourhood used to delight to go to Windsor Castle because they were always royally treated. Carriages were sent to meet them at the station, and luncheon was served to them by powdered footmen.

Eating and drinking had always been one of the national amusements of Great Britain, and therefore I was not surprised to find at Windsor Castle the most valuable gold table service in the world. It was valued at one million pounds sterling, and is a historical and stupendous work of the goldsmith's art. It consists of huge gold salvers, upon which were dozens and dozens of gold platters, and includes great gold drinking cups, gold soup tureens, gold dishes for roasts, and two enormous dishes big enough to carry the famous English boar's head. It was a barbaric memento of Great Britain's devotion to the feast. I shall never forget the gorgeousness of that million pound gold service, designed and preserved for kings only.

The whole royal household was brought up like a large well-conducted family, and Queen Victoria, as the integral part of a great nation's honour, was faithful to her trust, to the traditions of her ancestry.

LADY WINIFRED RENSHAW

Lady Winifred Renshaw, gifted, tall, very haughty and very commanding, elder daughter of the Countess of Seitrim, commissioned the author to make her trousseau.

The latter part of Queen Victoria's reign was spent almost entirely apart from her official obligations. She was very fond of San Remo in Italy. She loved the Mediterranean, and spent part of every year there. She became enamoured with Cimez. Her daily plans of life were always beautifully arranged. She was evidently a woman of deep and sweet attachment. When first married, her love for the Prince Consort was always quite obvious. There was a yearning for his affection, which is a sentiment wholly outside the instinct of passion, and I believe in after years that the memory of this tenderness often thrilled her heart anew.

Queen Victoria was a religious woman, not in the outward noisy manner of the bigot, but sincerely devoted to the High Church of England, and her charity toward those who recognised the love in their homes that she enjoyed with her husband and her children, was proverbial. The greatest bond between the Queen and the Prince Consort was music. He was devoted to Schumann, and Queen Victoria loved the piano. He played very well, and it is said that by accident Her Majesty discovered this, when she found him alone one day, playing the "Träumerei." The discovery that he possessed this talent gave her wonderful pleasure, and

it was then she begged him to play Chopin to her.

Their love was really ideal. They often walked on the narrow edge of the beach, below the rocky cliffs near Balmoral Castle. Unseen and unattended, they would re-discover maritime plants in the shallow water. All sorts of things they collected in this way, and brought them home to show the children. It would take a much cleverer pen than mine to do justice to this idyl, to the unselfish devotion which Queen Victoria gave her husband and her family. She found the greatest comfort in her rôle as a ministering angel to those who suffered. She would personally visit the poor, especially the old people in the cottages, and her dignity and manner, her kindness at heart, and her loftiness of purpose simply amazed her people. She was greatly blessed for her nursery was completely filled, and all her children, from their tenderest babyhood, were brought up in a love for the open air, and for the influences of nature.

The Prince of Wales was the most interesting child, headstrong, generous, plucky, and at the same time extraordinarily tender-hearted. His boyish, resolute air and his charming manner made him a universal favourite. He was very affectionate

and sensitive, and he was well trained in bodily exercise.

Those wonderful gatherings in the sheltered gardens at Windsor Castle, where Queen Victoria would sit, surrounded in later years by her grandchildren! She was especially fond of Princess Christian, whose husband, a Schleswig-Holstein, lost an eye through an accidental shooting in Windsor Forest. The two sons of Princess Christian are fighting brother against brother. One fights for Germany, and the other for England. Princess Louise, the wife of the late Duke of Argyle, had the most beauty of any of Queen Victoria's children.

I remember once being permitted to peep into Her Majesty's studio, or boudoir, at Windsor Castle. It was an oval-shaped room, hung with old Flemish lace. There was a fine collection of superb old Chelsea and Dresden china. Pine logs were smouldering lazily in an open fireplace, and there were natural flowers everywhere. I remember distinctly a very old clock that stood solemnly in a corner, where it had been placed since it came from the Black Forest. On the walls were pictures by Sir Joshua Reynolds, Turner, Hopner, and the adjoining conservatory was filled with

camellias, gardenias, ferns, and orchids. From this distance which separates that era of peace and splendour in Great Britain to the present atmosphere charged with all the horrors that civilisation can endure, one wonders what Queen Victoria would say were she to return to the barbaric vision of the world as it is to-day.

Above all things, Her Majesty Queen Victoria loved poetry, and the satirical Heine was a great favourite of hers. I heard through a very intimate friend that her favourite poem was Heine's "The Two Grenadiers." She helped the unfortunate unconditionally, and personally consoled them just as she did her own family. It was her custom often to go unaccompanied, perhaps with only one servant, into the squalid cottages of Scotland. She usually chose the sunset hour for these trips, carrying flowers and fruit to those who were sick. She always found some encouraging, cheering words of hope and sympathy, unrestricted by any religious exaggeration of preaching.

On one occasion the Queen came upon a rough Scotch miner, dragging a woman by the hair, and kicking her vigorously with his hob-nailed boots. Unmindful of herself, she started beating the man with her umbrella with such vigour, in the face, that

in his amazement he stopped, and stared at Her Majesty. The woman resented her interference, and demanded why she did so. The Queen answered by giving them a couple of sovereigns.

"Beat her, my friend, beat her all she wants, she certainly deserves it for being so loyal to you," said Her Majesty.

The land which Her Majesty enjoyed above all was the Riviera. Summer and winter the Riviera is a world of flowers. The climate is so mild that there are wild stalks blooming in the crevices of those old walls. Upon all the windowsills of those crazy little houses one sees all year round pots of basilica, geranium and fuchsias. The fields are abloom with almond-scented white særazin and crimson clover. I can almost smell the heath of purple and brown, now. Those were the days of chivalry, when there was a charm indescribably sincere. How tasteless and tame seems this twentieth century of ours, compared to it.

The great climax of Queen Victoria's reign was the war in South Africa, it was her death knell.

She was very fond of going about incognito, and on one occasion, while staying at Scarborough, a Yorkshire seaside resort, she met some very charming people who did not know she was a Queen.

While standing on the beach, a sailor came up to her and her party.

"Will you have a row, ma'am, only six pence an hour?" he said.

"Why, of course we will," said Her Majesty, and they all embarked in a little rowboat. Being a Tar of the old fashioned kind, of course, he took this opportunity to "spin a yarn," and this was it:

"Ladies, did yer notice that little old house on the beach?" he asked, and when Her Majesty said yes, he told the following story:

"It was to that wery house that a strange woman went once to see the owner, who was a poor, bedridden old man.

" 'Are you Tom Smith?' she asked.

" 'Yes,' he said.

" 'Then get up and try to follow me. I bring you from the far East a box, filled with treasures, with gold, with all the jewels that the crown ever held, and the whole top of the box is filled with the sovereigns of our dear, precious little Queen Victoria."

He paused, so that the wonder of the story could sink in, then he said rather roughly:

"I wish I could meet the lassie, I would ha' gi'n her a real smack in the mouth."

The Queen raised her hand very gently, and said to him: "Will this hand do, for I am Queen Victoria?"

She was a Queen of grace, of soulful consideration and kindness. Pageantry, pomp and ceremony she did not like, and when she consented to wear all the insignia of her lofty rank, her presence was not improved by the priceless display of jewels, for the precious stones themselves seemed to gather their magnificence and their loveliness from being in contact with her.

Her political ideas were extremely broad. She used to say that every one believed a republican form of government was the best.

I remember seeing Her Majesty at one very important Court function, when she was wearing one of the most beautiful Court dresses I ever saw. It was of light blue moire with an entire overdress of spun gold tulle, held from the shoulders by clusters of real roses. Her head-dress was a sort of coronet of pink pearls, sapphires and diamonds. She wore a fan-shaped bodice. The endless, fan-shaped train and bodice of this period were of the softest, shimmering tulle, embroidered with pearl-hearted Parma violets. She wore a mantle of the finest gauze, powdered with jet. Around her

shapely neck hung row after row of softly gleaming black pearls and black diamonds interspersed with brilliants. In her hand she carried a marabout fan, adorned with her crown in diamonds.

On this occasion Her Majesty was in a very amiable mood, smiling and conversing graciously with every one. She looked so youthful that her contemporaries could easily have been taken for her seniors by many years. After the usual Court presentations were over, tea was served in a large supper room for Their Majesties and their immediate followers, while other guests took supper in adjoining drawing-rooms. By midnight all was over. Her Majesty did not like late hours, that is why her wonderful complexion never required any cosmetics.

Cold water in her tub before retiring, a glass of hot milk, were the preliminaries of Her Royal sleep. She was a very early riser, and as soon as she awoke she had a cup of tea, a few slices of buttered toast, and some fruit. Her life was simple, unostentatious, beautiful.

CHAPTER III

ROYAL GAMBLERS AND THEIR AMOURS

THE clatter of gold, the sparkle of jewels, and woman, create those extraordinary places of picturesque but violent elements of human nature called gambling centres. There were two famous ones in Europe in my youth, one was in Homburg, conducted by the celebrated Monsieur Blanc, the other was in Monte Carlo.

The time when Homburg was at its best was in the autumn, but it was in the summer of 1867 that I with all the world went to that picturesque place, Taunus, where were united the social and scandalous men and women of Europe. The gambling *salons* here, which were run by M. Blanc, were magnificently decorated. He spent a fortune creating an impression in these rooms that you had entered a feudal castle of a former period. A wonderful collection of famous old masters covered the walls.

No better symbol of the ruling passion could

have been conceived than that complete *façade* of full length mirrors which greeted you at the entrance to these rooms. You could see yourself there in your full glory, and others could see you, so that you could be bewitchingly and enthusiastically admired. And yet one could hardly get close enough to these mirrors to have one's own reflection complete, they were so arranged. M. Blanc, as I remember him, was a little round-faced Frenchman, with a pointed beard. He was an educated man, a widower, whose two daughters married brilliantly, and whose granddaughter married the son of the King of Greece. He was rather fond of the ladies, and frequently when he saw them lose he would offer them his cheque, whispering to them, "Continue, continue."

Of course, one entered these rooms with a certainty of feeling that you would leave them possessing the treasures of Golconda.

The gaming tables opened at 11 A. M., and were always covered with gold *louis*. The struggle in the crowd was to procure a seat as near as possible to the head *croupier*. The gold itself was brought up in huge bags from the vaults. These bags were guarded by two or three employees of the bank, who carefully watched their discharge upon the table,

where the gold and bank notes were deposited. The game itself was roulette. Each *croupier* had a small shovel before him, with which to handle the gold and the notes. Every two hours these men were relieved from duty. The head *croupier* sat upon a chair, considerably elevated from the rest, keeping a sharp eye upon any errors in payment, whether too little or too much, to the players. The lowest sum one could risk at the roulette was five francs.

The two men who were internationally notorious as celebrated gamblers in the sixties were Prince Paul Demidoff and Garcia. The latter broke the bank of Monte Carlo once, and at Homburg and Wiesbaden twice. There was always a crowd surrounding these men, a curious mob, seeking to follow their luck. The conditions and surroundings of these places were indescribably feverish and unreasonable. While all conditions of society could be found at these places, there was a predominance of those types that belonged to Babylon of old. The entrances were thronged, and many of the beautiful women were not irreproachable. Love was in the air, and these radiant charmers were royally paid by the managers of M. Blanc to attract, to ensnare men to become mad, which is never a very difficult thing to do. I recall some of these

women, those who represented predominant types.

There was Baruchi, whose type of beauty completely overpowered the heir to the throne of Holland. He was called Prince Citron, and himself was a famous lady-killer, a distinguished rake of his time. He spent millions where others spent pennies. His sumptuous apartments in Paris were famous as representing the last word in extravagance. It is said that he presented Baruchi with a string of pearls which must have cost over half a million dollars. Her bosom friend Soubise was the opposite type of beauty from Baruchi, who was dark, luxuriously oriental. Soubise was blonde, and therefore the contrast of their individual and supreme beauty made them intimate friends. I remember an incident, which illustrates the power of beauty at the gaming tables. Madame Soubise had been playing for some time, and having lost every penny she possessed, was about to leave, when a certain prince of the old aristocracy of France turned to the croupier and said, "Madame is good for twenty-five thousand francs, please go on." I especially remember her purse, which was a triumph of the goldsmith's art. It was a huge gold shell, deeply set with Brazilian diamonds of the purest colour. On one side was the coat of arms

of emeralds and topaz. The purse hung on a chain attached to her girdle, which, according to the fashion of the time, was made of Persian turquoise and Siberian rubies. The girdle and the purse were valued by a famous jeweller in Paris at seven hundred thousand francs. She always dressed magnificently, creating a slender silhouette, with her long, trailing skirts gracefully draped about her. She was a singularly graceful creature with dreamy green eyes. She looked like one of those pictures painted by Marckhardt. She reigned supreme in her world, and her entertainments were attended by all the great aristocrats of the period. Her hôtel was very wonderful and was beautifully decorated. She was a woman of fine taste, and her home was one of the show places in Paris. It is interesting to get a glimpse of the setting in which this feminine jewel lived for so long.

Her bedroom represented an Indian temple of Buddha. There were no chairs visible. The room was furnished with wonderful Kurdistan and Smyrna carpets. Her parquet floor was covered with Indian shawls. Her tapestries were Gobelins and Beauvais. Appropriately or not, they represented biblical scenes, such touching

episodes as Joseph being sold by his brethren, Moses in the Bulrushes, the drowning of the Egyptians and many fine reproductions of Hogarth.

Her boudoir was in turquoise velvet, the hangings of *Pointe de Flanders,* attached with huge cords and tassels, festooning the draperies, which hung in folds to the bottom of the floor. The floor itself was inlaid with arabesque of Malachite mosaics. The door knobs were of sterling silver. When her bric-a-brac was sold, it brought over five million francs.

She was very charitable but she treated her admirers with very little consideration. Mammon really meant nothing to her, for she ignored the wonderful men who had showered countless jewels upon her when she met a penniless young man who was a croupier at Homburg, with whom she eloped.

The dominating figures of these gambling rooms, however, were Paul Demidoff and the great gambler Garcia. They were the Neros of the Goddess of Fortune. They did not fiddle, but they whistled, and all that was corrupt in society was held spellbound. They threw showers of gold and notes at the women they admired, who fluttered around them, like moths in the glare. The hilarity of the

life during the gambling season was sustained by Count Caroli and Prince Esterhazy.

The atmosphere of the *salons de jeu* was over-perfumed perhaps, but it was a hot-house of artificial flowers in human form, brilliantly illuminated by the huge crystal chandeliers of the period of Louis XV. It was a crowd gone mad with desire for gold at any price, and the study of their faces in the midst of these miserable ambitions was often ghastly. I think it is generally known that the Russians are the most regardless and extravagant gamblers, and so these gaming tables were usually surrounded by grand dukes and their beautiful followers.

I remember particularly a striking figure, the Princess Yourowska. She was always attended by her footman in gorgeous livery, who stood behind her *fauteuil,* holding a case of *Louis d'ors.* She would frequently reach behind her, without looking, into this case, and place her bets. She dipped so frequently into this gold, that the case was sometimes quickly emptied. She was a good loser, and M. Blanc a big winner. She was not the only woman tempted solely by the thrills of inexhaustible chance, there was always that beautiful Russian, the Princess Souvaroff, who, with her commanding

figure, all could see was an enthusiastic gambler. Like all the Russians and the Poles, they loved to gamble. It was really an inspiring sight, to see the absolute calm with which the Grand Dukes Alexis and Nicholas would take their places behind the table, stake the maximum, walk away, and when the croupiers, in their soulless, nasal voices, lazily pronounced the fate of others in the usual phrase, "Rien ne va plus," their Imperial Highnesses would leisurely either pick up their games, or withdraw calmly to begin again.

There were many famous women, of course, who perhaps were better gamblers than the men, because, while they but lighted the fires to consume others, they were themselves of the asbestos quality. It seems to me that this particular type of woman has rather disappeared from the world of to-day, and therefore we can look upon her at this distance, with the analytical audacity of curious observers. There comes to my mind a woman who excessively and completely represents the type—Cora Pearl. As to beauty, as to the arts of love, as to her knowledge which contact with the world in its most complex relations had given her, she was supreme. Her worldliness made her a prime favourite. In her men saw all their longings, she depicted the com-

plete living identity of the woman of their dreams. Every man has some such woman, but he rarely meets her. She was a woman who took extreme pains to study the art of deception. It is said she would stand before the mirror, practising fond glances, developing the magic of her eyes.

For the heroes of her *amours* she had no sympathy, but she would pretend to listen to them, without a tremor in her heart. Some people called her beauty diabolical, if there is such a thing. I do not believe that beauty of any sort can, in its original birthright, have anything but a divine purpose, though it is often diabolically managed.

Cora Pearl was accused of being a supremely gifted actress of heroine's parts, off the stage. Unquestionably her beauty was of the kind that lifts men's souls above all tenderness. I recall almost verbatim a confession she made to me once, and I quote it here because it is a rare document of human heartlessness. She had the strength of the weak, which in women is a fascinating study in morals.

When Armand Duval, the son of the famous restaurateur, being rejected by Cora Pearl, shot himself one night in front of her door, she made this extraordinary exclamation:

"I do not know what it is to be anything but a courtesan, people may call me what they like. I follow my own inclinations, I take my own road. I was born to take what I can get. There have been some agreeable things in my life, such as spending a fortune in two years. I always knew, of course, that I was irresistible,—I knew that I was a vampire. I knew that I adored the golden calf, and it mattered little to me who worshipped me, or where, so long as I could shine. My greatest treasure was my marble skin, which I kept like ivory. I knew that the man I favoured took much pride in his imaginary success. He became a Paragon in the club."

She was a modern Cleopatra, her idea of life being that she would have accomplished her destiny when she had perpetuated the name of one of the most noble courtesans.

She had a particular weakness for princes, and usually talked marriage. Of course, she only pretended, everything she did was sham, she had no desire for any sincerity, but she was desirous of becoming a princess of the House of Orange. She preferred, of course, princes who were bachelors or widowers, and she pursued also married nobles who were in a fair way to become widowers. Many of

the men she selected were strangers whom she had never seen, and among them several who had never thought of her, and who never did think of her. Part of her creed in the religion of love was that she should never be adored by a man below the rank of prince. That is why, perhaps, she survived the tragedy of Armand Duval's suicide, that was the reason for her disdainful rejection of his love. She accepted the idea of love in the abstract, repudiating the idea of true love, because she was logical to her destiny. She was strong-minded, and fully realized the danger of permitting her heart to interfere. Her portrait hangs in a celebrated gallery, where spectators of all kinds, including the clergy, collect and meditate, and linger, to admire. The strong will of a beautiful woman can defeat unnatural influences, and knowing this, she made no hypocritical attempt to hide her character.

She died in abject misery, asking alms of those men whom she had spurned in her early days. She grew tired of grovelling like a worm in the world of pleasure where she had reigned, where her former lovers had forgotten her, and the choir boys gathered around her humble grave and sang, "Rest in Peace."

One of the favourite *bon mots* of this period in

the seventies, among these people of the gambling instinct, which interprets the license of the time, is worth quoting. It was this:

"Our Emperor Napoleon stuffs his ears with cotton."

All women who had been beloved by Napoleon III knew that they would be well treated in after years. There were, of course, occasional quarrels between the beautiful rivals for imperial favour. I remember an incident illustrating this between the famous Mrs. R. and Madame Soubise. They were both devout Catholics. One day they met at the Madeleine, both were suffering from a cold, both entered a pew together, and both were sneezing. A feud that had lasted for a long while, was patched up, when one of the ladies handed the other a little pot of cream and rosewater to rub on her nose.

Money came so fast and so easily in those colossal *salons* in Homburg, Baden-Baden, Wiesbaden, Monte Carlo, it was absolutely thrown away. There were magnificent dinner parties cooked especially for these royal gamblers that surpassed anything to be found in the world.

And yet, were they happy?

I often wondered when I saw Paul Demidoff with a *petite blonde*, Countess de G., what tradition

could bring these two opposite beings together. There was so much dross that glittered, so many parasites living in the rich soil. It was Paul Demidoff who, for the Countess de G., gave that celebrated masquerade which cost the fabulous sum of three million roubles. The entire suite of *salons* were hung in royal blue *velour d'Utrecht* with huge *cordelières* in silver, and the frieze entirely covered with superb Burano lace. The entire scene was lighted with millions of wax candles, shedding a wonderful lustre. It required a separate staff of footmen in gorgeous livery, merely to snuff the candles, to prevent the grease from dropping on the polished parquet floor. The effect of the dancers, whirling slowly to the strains of Offenbach's delightful music, was like a symbolic scene from the underworld, the soft candle lights casting weird shadows.

There was a Grand Duchess, dressed as Sappho, dancing a gavotte with an Austrian Grand Duke, dressed as an Incroyable. Baruchi and her type came to the ball frankly as courtesans of the First Empire, deftly leaving little to the imagination, wearing sandals, pale rose tights, diamonds and coral anklets, bracelets with gold and turquoise chains, attached to their little fingers, as a *Scara-*

mouche. It was all like a dream, only the figures were alive.

Among the cavaliers one saw at these midnight-till-sunrise feasts was the handsome Duke Alvarez de Toledo, who turned the heads of so many women, his cousin the Marquis de Gandara, and the Duke of Montegano, representing the fine flower of the court of the Queen Isabel of Spain, who, by the way, was a lady who counted her lovers in legions. One saw also General Pim, who was her constant companion. Her quiet little husband, Francis D'Assise, was only an onlooker. She was a woman of tremendous size, very jovial, debonair, a "real good sport." None of her children were ever quite so popular. Her handsome grenadiers always stood at attention when this grand Queen inspected her troops, and if history speaks the truth, many of these stalwart soldiers owed their promotion to her.

One cannot but think, while touching the royalty of Spain in retrospect, of that beautiful woman, the Infanta Eulali, a lover of music and books. She is still a very charming woman, a great friend of the Duchess de Richelieu, formerly the princess of Monaco. It was the latter who made Isidore de Lara, the musician, celebrated.

These ladies, however, did not quite belong to the era of triumph in the days of Napoleon III. They were the comets only of the end of the Second Empire. They often came to England, where I saw them.

What delightful days of luxury those were in the sixties, when one disappeared from the domestic monotony for little pilgrimages to the gambling *salons* and the races in Baden-Baden. Every one flocked to this charming watering-place in the Black Forest.

No one will forget that wonderful little rendezvous called Stephaniebad, where the most illustrious, and notorious, people foregathered for breakfast. It was an Elysium tucked away in the pines. The exquisite aroma of those pines! Those little river trout, fresh caught, served on those silver dishes, invitingly curled up! The delicious coffee and cream! Indeed you were glad to be alive, and those beautiful women, feasting in the morning sun upon their eager prey, whom they confused that they might destroy. They were the decoys of the gambling rooms of Maison Blanc.

I can still see the faces of the gamblers gathered around the gaming table. Faces that were human masques of great fortune, or great despair. Their

bodies immobile, they stood like statues. I still hear those delightful little screams of joy from the women as they swooped down upon their winnings from the tables. I also hear their little sighs of despair, hideous little gasps of absolute ruin. Sometimes the ruin came in different forms.

I was present when Madame Adelina Patti, then the Marquise de Caux, when dining, one evening on the terrace, near the gaming tables, was startled by her maid, Caroline, who came rushing to her very excitedly to say that somebody had ransacked her rooms and escaped with all her jewels. She never recovered them, and they represented a huge fortune. Later, she became a bit tired of her volatile husband, who, being aide-de-camp of Napoleon III, waved his handkerchief so often at the ladies that Patti finally separated from him peacefully. Her second husband, Nicolini, who was certainly more like a hair-dresser than anything else, was already married and had several children, when her romance began. She made him divorce his Italian wife, leave his children, and paid his wife a large indemnity. She gave employment to his daughters, or at least educated them. Nicolini died, and Adelina Patti's widowhood became involved in a third matrimonial enterprise, with Baron Cedar-

strom, who came from a very aristocratic Swedish family with no money. They married, I believe very happily, notwithstanding that he was thirty years younger than herself.

Perhaps the most inveterate gambler of the *salons* was the Countess Kisleff, who with her son almost built the little city of Homburg which they ultimately lost. Homburg repaid them by naming a street, Kisleff Strasse. I can see the old lady now in her ample white wig profusely ornamented with artificial flowers. On the hottest day she wore a heavy black mantilla of velvet, and her dress, also a black velvet, had a sweeping train which fell in gorgeous folds behind her. Her *esclavage,* a huge necklace peculiar to that period, which was wound many times about the neck and hung far down on the body, was of such enormous precious stones that the countess attracted the attention of the multitude, through which she passed on entering the gaming *salon,* for she was eccentric to a degree.

Her servants were always with her, and she was carried in a sedan chair of the Louis IV period to the gaming *salons.* She lived in them, entering them at eleven A. M. and never leaving them till eleven P. M. Her luncheon was brought in to her on a silver tray. After luncheon she would take her

money rake and begin afresh with all her cards beside her, and all the tricks of her system to break the bank at work. Her system usually failed, but she occasionally made a great deal of money. Judging by the amount of money she lost, her fortune must have been superior to Rothschild's. Her son inherited a colossal fortune, which permitted him to live where he liked and how he liked. Naturally he was very popular with the stage beauties, particularly with a French dancer of the type which was then so much admired in the world-famous "Black Crook." The peculiarity of this type was that all the ladies of the ballet wore black tights and red shoes.

I recall the trio of graceful dancers, Madame Brunette, Finette, and Bouhelier, who were the attraction of the Little Theatre in Homburg. Then there was the famous Fidélaire, who danced so gracefully on a thin wire rope. The code of that period was to enjoy life at any cost, our code is to take the best and leave the dregs.

It was at Compiègne where, when the hunting season began, one saw the most wealth and nobility of the old *régime*. Here one saw the Countess of M., the Countess de G., the Princess S., the Marquise L., the Duchess de M. A romance of this

time was that of the Duke D'Aumale waiting for his beloved Blanche D'Antinguée, that glorious creature with the lovely ash-blonde hair and a figure like a Juno, who was such a favourite in that play, "The Craven Eye." He gave her the most beautiful hôtel in the Avenue Bois de Boulogne. It was she who was afterwards immortalised by Emil Zola in his book called "Nana."

CHAPTER IV

COURT SOCIETY AROUND THE PRINCE OF WALES

No one can read this story of the society that surrounded royalty in England, during the *régime,* without feeling that it is pre-eminently a history of mixed hypocrisy and convincing scandal. The story of the Court of St. James, from that period when the Prince of Wales was perhaps twenty, and whose first guide into the world of romance was one of the most brilliant and beautiful women of the Court, the Duchess of M——; to that period of mature diplomacy which has placed him in the record of international affairs as the greatest of royal diplomats, there is a ceaseless list of beautiful women and wonderful *amours.* It is my intention to take individually and separately each one of those favourite Court beauties who influenced the career of Edward VII. This is to be a chronicle, chiefly, of the brilliant trail along which royalty and its contemporaries have travelled downward. It is a chronicle told entirely from my personal

knowledge and experience of Court life, and may therefore contain unknown and untold incidents that gossip and rumour have more or less distorted. In later chapters the psychology of love, as it influenced the Court of Great Britain, will be developed objectively. It is my purpose only, in these opening pages, therefore, to prepare the way.

One must put aside the most important traditions of convention, one must look upon the heart stories of these beautiful women comprehendingly, with a sympathy, with a broad idea that the morals of love must not be stupefied by convention. Remembering, that in the reign of Edward VII society plunged from the heights of the sublime to the verge of the ridiculous, we must reluctantly assume that the strong and simple character of Queen Victoria was not sustained by the heir apparent to the throne. Unquestionably he was sorely tempted. Quite early in his royal career, the prince established such blundering relationships with the beauties of the Court of St. James, that only his extreme good humour and personal tact saved him from open scandal. There was no special reserve of attitude, no sacred circle drawn around his royal presence. He was the subject of much gossip at the London clubs, where men irreverently asked

each other, "Who is the prince's latest mash?"

I gathered something of the splendour of His Royal Highness's tastes in love, from the gowns I designed for these Court beauties. Like other men, His Royal Highness was lured by the dazzle of laces and satins. They were decidedly enticing, these lovely women, when I had finished with them. In the interval, during which they went through the processes of my fitting room, they confided to me the secrets of their vanities, their ambitions, and—some of them, of their hearts. I made many of their dresses, and some startling *negligées*. One really could not blame any man, not even the Prince of Wales, for submitting to their enticing beauty.

It was not only the affairs in which His Royal Highness was concerned that established the character, may I say the dissipation of the Court of St. James. When, at the age of twenty, His Royal Highness found himself the leader of the highest social circles of England, there had been scandals, and there had been love stories that should have shocked him, had he inherited the strict qualities of his adorable mother, Queen Victoria.

In the early eighties, for instance, one of the most charming women was the Dowager Countess

C——, who found relief from prosaic surroundings in a romance with the Duke of B——, then the Earl of W. It was a romance that lasted for many years, and perhaps would have been undisturbed until now, except for the appearance on the horizon of a Madame de T——, who openly rivalled the exquisite Countess. The result of this situation was much anonymous and libellous correspondence which produced almost a law suit that would have steeped London society deep in the mire. It was a most unsavoury condition, and was widely talked about in London society. The Dowager Countess C.'s husband was divorced several times. His son went on the stage after marrying a chorus girl. The most extraordinary part of this relation is the fact that it was generally accepted, and sustained among their friends. They were usually invited together by hostesses of brilliant position, and their intimacy was not disturbed or criticised. In fact, it was generally understood that the Dowager Countess C. would eventually marry her aristocratic affinity on the death of her husband. When the Duke of B. transplanted his affections, it was a great blow to her. The Duke, however, married her rival, and has been singularly happy and devoted to his family. The Dowager Countess

C. retired into absolute seclusion. It was a mysterious fact in the history of these romances of Court life, that the heart-broken took their punishment with singular courage. Doubtless, there is a great reserve force in the pride which lies in the blood of the aristocrat. The Dowager Countess, in after years, only referred to her devotion to the Duke of B. with a certain peculiar pride in the fact that she had never been ruled by conventions of the world. Her daughter married well, but inherited the flirtatious qualities of her mother. She became the second wife of Lord W., because his first wife, Lady Lilian W., was involved in a love affair with the Marquis of S., whose adventures were notorious.

In these chronicles of Court romance, Lady Lilian W. ranks among the daring and regardless beauties. She was of statuesque figure, had beautiful Titian hair, and her extreme tastes and extravagance in dress became practically an asset for the luxurious but questionable marquis. He was an *attaché* in one of the Courts of Europe. Because of his peculiar complexion he was spoken of in society as "The Blue Monkey." I believe that for some inexplicable reason, probably the caprice of femininity, he was rather enthusiastically admired.

In the sense of certain acknowledged qualities that go to make up the term "thorough gentleman" he was accepted everywhere. He was a thoroughbred, an intimate of His Royal Highness. They were constantly together. Many were the trips up the river to Oxford they had together.

How wonderful all these favoured women were, —tall, beautiful figures, lovely heads, faces like madonnas, hair that intoxicated. One in particular I recall, who to-day is in the Red Cross sisterhood, whose waist was so marvellously slender that His Royal Highness, when waltzing with her, declared that he was afraid she would break in half,—but of course she didn't. The Prince of Wales seemed to have a taste for witty and spirituelle women, in his earlier years at least. This particular Court beauty was a splendid billiard player. Her week-end parties were always attended by officers of the crack regiments.

Among the Court beauties was that extraordinary freak of British aristocracy, the Marquis of Anglesea, who looked, dressed, and aspired to be a woman. He was the fashionable female impersonator of royalty. He gave special performances in his private theatre on his estate at Bodaseer in Wales. It was his custom to invite all the attrac-

tive chorus girls to these performances, and to reward them with presents of magnificent diamonds. He had a collection of emeralds that were the finest in the world. His fearful extravagance eventually brought him into bankruptcy. His peculiar dissipation was probably inherited, for his father divorced his first wife, an American, so that he could retire from the world with the Countess de G., the sister of the notorious Princess S., whose career is discussed later on. The Countess de G. was a little woman, very Russian, very barbaric. She lived for many years at the historical castle at Bodaseer, in Wales. Her daughter's *trousseau* was the most gorgeous ever made, I think. She married the Honourable E. Stanhope, son of the Marquis of H. His Royal Highness made a special visit to the dressmaker, to see this *trousseau.*

The Court of St. James may have had the outward air of lethargy, may have seemed indolent, but the early nursery training of royalty had evidently failed to stifle the intrigues of romance. A complete record of the heart burnings at the Court of St. James is quite impossible; it would require a dictionary to define its moral psychology. One recalls, however, a few of the high spots in the romantic wilderness of inexplicable love affairs.

For instance, there was the famous Zulu beauty, as she was called, the celebrated Mrs. D. S., wife of a South-African millionaire. He had untold wealth, and when they came to London they were warmly received. She may have inherited something of the freedom of the South African veldts, for she was singularly willing to meet His Royal Highness clandestinely. With her bosom friend, Mrs. W., they took a house in Kensington, and there received His Royal Highness through the subterfuge of social receptions. These receptions were a little overdone, as the two women were both inclined to extremes. The staircase of their house was banked with lilies of the valley and violets, the boudoir smothered with Bankshire roses, in honour of His Royal Highness. A present peer of the realm fell in love with her. Her husband naturally divorced her, but His Royal Highness objected to her marriage with the peer, and her romance with the latter was a failure. In fact, I believe that His Royal Highness found means to estrange her from her aristocratic lover, and brought about the result of her remarriage to her husband. She functions now as a matron in one of the big hospitals in London, where she nurses the heroes from the trenches. Her only son went

into the Seventh Hussars, and became aide-de-camp to one of the British generals.

It is impossible to escape a sense of wonder as to whether the conventions which are supposed to protect one's emotions should be adopted, or adapted to our hearts. So many of these Court beauties of a younger generation are now performing wonderful and heroic services for the wounded. So many of them began with a feverish disregard of commonplace respectability, and are now accepted as teachers and sisters of mercy. To the philosopher, it is worth studying, this whirl of emotions which brings so many women to a realization of higher and better things than the vanities of love.

As an instance of this thought, there is the wonderful devotion and sincere friendship existing between the Marchioness of R. and Her Majesty the Dowager Queen Alexandra. In her early life the marchioness, because of her regardless *amours,* was the laughing-stock of Paris. She was notorious among the undesirable women of fashion. A wonderful woman, with extraordinary beauty, who has emerged from the mire of her emotions to the heights of a friendship with the most distinguished woman in England.

There was an unwritten law among these handsome women of the Court of St. James, and perhaps their beauty and their wit were often misconstrued in the opinion of those men who reason badly. However, being Ladies and Gentlemen of the Court of St. James, silence among them became an axiom. It had grown up with them, become a part of themselves, like a sense of honour. Then too, they had to be silent, to avoid being talked about, or endure the penalty of being forever cast out of the royal circle. Many of the marriages of these beautiful women and rather idle men were failures.

That charming American girl from Baltimore, who married a duke of the realm, learned the unwritten law of the Court of St. James. There was a guardsman who laid down the law to her. She was not really to blame, for her husband chose a pseudo-duchess, one Belle Bilton, and with her he lived his romance apart. She indeed rose supreme. Then, there was that charming American actress of the musical stage, who even to-day retains her beauty and her lovely child-like expression. She married, and her memoirs to-day would make interesting reading for those English aristocrats who adored her. Love was in the air! In the Court

of St. James it was perpetual springtime. One never knew where one would stumble upon an unexpected romance.

Most of these wonderful women of the Court of St. James, at least those who inspired the greatest love stories, were not young women. They had passed the meridian of life, and I often wondered how brilliantly they kept those eminent men who were celebrities in the diplomatic and military life of England. The Englishman of aristocratic tendencies, however, is usually more charmed by women of subtlety and wit than by the most radiant youthfulness. Such women, for instance, as Lady Sara Wilson, dominant, independent, brave, executive. Her book, which contained the stories of her experiences during her imprisonment at Mafeking, in South Africa, was widely read. It was a many-sided picture of the life among British officers out there, and she was very much admired for her delicate handling of certain romantic incidents. She was by no means beautiful, but she deserved the glory of her success since she was proud, as all the Churchills are. She came of a family that had many romantic adventures. In fact, the entire atmosphere in which these ladies of the Court of St. James lived, might have been en-

tirely contemporary with the Court of Louis XIV. One wonders how Queen Victoria, who was so exceptionally apart in character from the quality of the Court of St. James, did not in some vigorous way dispel the vulgarism of English society. There was a time when the garden parties at Marlborough House were practically dominated by a trio of famous beauties who were known as The Three Graces. They were Mrs. C. W., Mrs. W., and Mrs. L. The success of these social events was practically created by the beauty and elegance of these women. And yet, men and women in the street knew perfectly well their scandalous reputations. But then, there was hardly any member of the aristocracy at the Court during these times, who had not played some questionable character in some undesirable romance.

Surely every one recalls that wonderful case where a lady of one of the proudest families of Scotland, a sister of one of The Three Graces, was called upon to give evidence that her infant was the offspring of the future King of England. Also it is perhaps not forgotten that she was put into an asylum where some people affirm she still is. And after all, she only spoke the truth, in spite of the fact that the future King of England

had to go upon the witness stand to contradict the venomous reports which made the whole of London ashamed.

As in all Courts, it was the custom for the aristocrats of the Court to exert all their strength and polish to consolidate the ruling passions of the sovereign, or the heir apparent. This may explain many of the disturbing elements of the English Court which have passed into the chronicles of scandal. The first event in the *amours* of His Royal Highness which stirred society to its depths, was his affair with the beautiful English actress.

As a human document she has become one of the most interesting in the entire history of the Court of St. James, because perhaps she has survived the customary downfall. She preserved her incognito fairly well, but when receiving His Royal Highness assumed her new relationship with gusto. So as to facilitate the laxity of His Royal Highness' domestic ties at Court, many revels had been transferred to the houses of his boon companions, where this beautiful English actress met him. To be sure, she was supplanted by other beautiful women, but her reign was as glorious as theirs. She amassed a huge fortune, and it is said beggared one or two millionaires. Colossal sums passed

through the hands of these Court beauties of the nineteenth century. Of course, a great deal of this money went to the jewellers, the dressmakers, who must have profited enormously. Doubtless she would like to have been able to retain the constancy of her royal swain, but not, I imagine, because she wished to satisfy her heart.

I wonder if she really possessed one?

The affair with Sir Robert Peel, the episode concerning the loss of her diamonds at her beautiful house in London, helped to sever their very close relationship. I am sure it was an evil day when she broke the golden thread. She still retains his autographed photos which always adorn her abiding place, whether it is the Carlton in London or the Ritz in New York—for her royal lover became a reigning sovereign. Her marriage was decidedly one of convenience. Her husband had been her friend, and was anxious to marry her but she used to tell him, "Stay your tears, postpone them for another time." Later he became her husband, and they lived together only *pro tem.,* parting quite amiably, for both had attained their end, he an income, and she a fortune.

The love story of the beautiful countess whose sumptuous presence and exquisite personality en-

tirely captured His Royal Highness from the time they first met at a Court function is well known. In a later chapter I deal more fully with this phase of this adorable Court beauty who, when the end of her romance came, had to face outrageous calumnies. Some really thought her more sinned against than sinning. She was a familiar figure in Hyde Park, in Bond Street. Her motor was so original that it attracted wide attention. It was entirely white outside and in.

CHAPTER V

THE GALLANTRIES OF HIS ROYAL HIGHNESS

During his younger days, His Royal Highness undoubtedly kept open house in his heart for the ladies. He never entirely closed the door to them in after years. To the last he sent them valuable presents, as he did in his youth. There is consolation in the thought (to those of us who are prudish) that the late King Edward VII clung with the greatest affection and respect to his lovely princess and Queen.

It was at a wedding party in one of the minor German states that the Prince of Wales proposed to the Princess Alexandra of Denmark. Her beauty, her character, her remarkable dignity and grace have passed into contemporary history without a challenge. Never have a monarch and his consort been so idolised and so loved by the masses, the classes and the aristocracy, as King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra. Men went mad about her beauty, but there has never been a breath

of scandal about her. Her eldest son, the Duke of Clarence, bore a striking resemblance to her. Her eldest daughter, the Duchess of Fife, like herself, married for love, a man twenty years her senior, a man who had sowed his wild oats as the friend of her father. Of course, rumours of His Majesty's love affairs must have reached the ears of the Queen. Frequently, no doubt, these rumours were exaggerated. I was told that Queen Alexandra expressed herself to an inquisitive inquiry concerning her royal husband, as follows:—

"If all that the world says of my liege, the King, is only in a small degree true, all I can say is that I am very proud to possess such a wonderful personality."

The women of the Court of St. James who fell into the turmoil of luxury, under the sway of the more plebeian instincts of man, which surrounded the royal person of this charming prince, were really not in very serious danger because they were mostly in the fullness of their maturity, or if younger, they had grown old before their time, perhaps robbed themselves to give their best to their royal prince. There was unquestioned rivalry, and the shock when the downfall of a favourite did come, was socially overwhelming.

The fate of the beautiful countess who for so long had been as the Bridge of Sighs to the prince's love affairs, was really in his hands. The affair was broken at the desire of the prince, but at that time the countess had outgrown her infatuation for the man. At the beautiful castle, where she entertained him, everything was always very quiet and in excellent order. Being independently rich, she could surround herself with regal luxury. There was never any noise or confusion in the management of this castle. To be sure, the prince had moments when his royal dignity burst bounds, as when he chased a party into the pastry cook's pantry, and pelted them with flour. Royalty sometimes enjoys a primitive sense of humour, the undignified quality of such horseplay was shown on the blank faces of his royal followers. Then too, there were occasional whispers of it in the critical press, which is the worst punishment of vulgarism.

While the countess entertained the royal prince, at the time being fully aware that her sway was weakened, the new Aspasia, who was not at all a woman of the world, reluctantly spent her evenings at home. She was exquisitely fair, with blue-green eyes, and of course bright red lips. The happiness which she expected from her *liaison* with royalty

died almost at its birth. However, she must be remembered in the history of Court scandal as having played the part of a royal mistress in name at any rate. She was loyal to her royal admirer, and furthermore, she gained the love and respect of other ladies of the Court. Even the countess, often dismissed by historians with curt etiquette, tried to cheer up her existence in after years. She always behaved with sad dignity and gentleness in her trying position. It is not recorded that the Prince of Wales suffered from any shattered ideals. It may be assumed that in the midst of his *amours* certain refinements expected of royalty were not too scrupulously sustained in his courtships. These reflections, of course, are in retrospect, gathered from information and impressions received from those who were in the heart of things at court during the *régime* of the late Queen Victoria and the young Prince of Wales.

It was in the summer, when all the world of humanity tumbled pell-mell from the reserve of winter, that the prince and his consort withdrew to Cowes, a celebrated watering place. It was at Cowes that many of the court intrigues were stirred. It was here that a certain grand duchess of a very cold country fell under the spell of moon-

lit mesmerism. It is recorded that the young prince invited the grand duchess one evening for a sail on his yacht. She slipped away with him, unattended by any lady-in-waiting, which is a forbidden act of royalty. Forgetful of all restrictions, they wandered away, and it is said she told him in an irresponsible moment of feminine thralldom that she felt her incognito might place her under suspicion. Finally they reached a place at the end of the lawn, where the yacht was supposed to be, in the water beyond, and there was no sign of it. History says there was a dreadful moment of suspense, for she suddenly realised that the grand duke, her husband, was probably in search of her, and grand dukes of cold countries are very choleric. In the midst of this pause, a footman ran breathlessly towards the prince, and reported that the yacht had been moored a little further down the coast. The grand duchess was soon on deck again.

The Prince's fidelity towards the fair sex was always rather delicate. His affair with a celebrated stage beauty made her notorious in the course of her first year at the Court of St. James, not him. His tactics were those of the sheathed hand. As a man, he was a great patron of art, of literature, of industrial enterprises, and he was al-

ways able to promote the fortune of the ladies he admired. She, of course, this stage beauty, was enamoured of wealth. Relentless in her relations, she attained a dominance over the prince and his mind that was surprising to lookers-on. Personally, she was not very much liked, her mental horizon did not extend beyond her innate consciousness of her physical powers. She was unflinching in the face of scandal, though not without the capacity for tremour. She was not entirely exempt from self-deception, knowing well that she often chilled the public that went to see her out of curiosity. She was never a popular idol, like Nell Gwynn of King Charles's times, and she treated her public with a shrug of her beautiful shoulders, of which she was so proud. These were matters, however, which did not disturb His Royal Highness. He never allowed any bonds which fettered him to be strained by this stage beauty. She was a human document, written in a cipher which had not been mastered and never solved. Sometimes she was very delightful. They were always on friendly terms, even after the break, and sometimes they dined together.

I am only writing those impressions that I have gathered of Court life, and drawing conclusions

from the conditions as I find them. Allowances can be reasonably made for His Royal Highness, whose youthful gallantries in his earlier days were not entirely his own fault. How the women pursued him with their gaze! How they courtesied when he went about! They followed him really much more than he followed them; he was a man, and sorely tempted. His successes were obviously unavoidable. Sometimes his *amours* took a tragic trend.

Fascinated by the appearance of a charming woman, whom he saw crossing the courtyard of St. James's Palace, one day, he sent his valet, an Austrian, with a secret message, expressing his admiration. There was nothing ambiguous about it,—it was a clear confession of admiration. The lady was not prepared to be seized by royal flattery, but later indicated a house of rendezvous. The secret appointment was kept. This unknown lady, I have heard, was particularly effective in the choice of the fine linen and her *crêpe de chine* petticoats. In discussing her, even her dressing gown, which was of the finest *batiste* and *valenciennes* lace, was spoken of with wonder and admiration by His Royal Highness to a friend. He pleaded for another interview, for another chance to see her again.

Her reply was as sincere a bit of feminine subtlety as one might expect. She told him that until she became enamoured of a prince she had been a very faithful wife to her husband, and that therefore one lapse should not be allowed to become a customary favour. She reminded him of her sacrifice in keeping the first rendezvous, but His Royal Highness insisted. Finally she invited him to visit her a second time at the house of her sister in London near Regents Park. The story goes that His Highness went to this house at the appointed time, and found it brilliantly lighted. He knocked at the door but there was no answer. Astonished and baffled, he returned to the street where a young man brushed against him.

"I have called to see Madame R.," he said.

"She is dead!" said the young man.

It is said that His Royal Highness went to a great deal of trouble to get to the bottom of her mysterious death, without success. It was rumoured, however, that she was poisoned by her husband, who had discovered the *liaison* with the prince.

I presume that often His Royal Highness poured out his confessions to his friend, Lord Farquhar, who was his chum, but in later years, in the

newer responsibilities of the throne, His Majesty became more orderly, more subdued. During all his reign, which was far too short, he was seldom in a rage. With the exception of the famous incident which relates to the indiscretion of a lady of the stage, who dropped a piece of ice down his back at a banquet, King Edward never lost his temper. I do not believe he ever hated any one. He was sometimes a little undecided, but he always deferred difficulties to the future. Not that he lacked the courage to face the music, but that he was wise.

Not all the ladies of the court were so graciously willing to submit to his royal gallantries. There was one charming young aristocratic girl, who, fearing the fascination of His Royal pursuit, threatened to immure herself in a convent for safety. She confessed this desire to her mother, and gave her reasons. Her mother said this to her:

"If you were some old woman, who had only a few years to live, your desire to enter a convent would not be so unusual. But, for a lovely girl like yourself, pure and unattached, to enter a convent so as to flee from a future king, is too ridiculous. Has his conversation ever caused you any scruples, my dear? It's all nonsense. Continue

to live in society, continue to cherish all his kindnesses, and be happy."

This incident actually confirmed the impression that His Royal Highness made upon the ladies of his court, or the impressions they made for him. I am inclined to think there were some exaggerations. There were certain modesties about the Prince of Wales that seemed to contradict any deep instinct for dissipation in him. For instance, he was abnormally fond of lemon cheese-cakes, a very harmless passion, although they were called, in deference to the prince's taste, "Maids of Honour." He was rather an epicure in pastry. He very much preferred the English sort, however. These facts were discovered about His Royal Highness because when people invited him out they wanted to know what were his favourite dishes. He disliked long dinners, and sometimes, to avoid indigestion, he requested the privilege of making the menu himself. But above all things he enjoyed a *good* dinner, and a good cigar, the Vally-Vally or a Bock being his favourite brand. He was usually short of ready money, and was always assisted by his friends, the late Baron Hirsch and Sassoon. The prince and these two gentlemen made an enchanting trio, well known about London.

I do not think that these habits of the young prince ever entirely left him during his reign. There was always a feigned boyishness, an irresponsible smile about King Edward VII. He seemed to be looking at the world with tolerant amusement. It is said that he often told his intimate friends, that his greatest wish was some day to become president of the Republic of Great Britain. He was too intelligent a man to enjoy the pomp and splendour with which his rank was surrounded. The Prince of Wales was tone-giving, to belong to his set was the social ambition of London. I am more familiar, of course, with his later years, that is to say from the time of his marriage, than I could be with his early youth.

As a man, the Prince of Wales disciplined himself for his reign as King of England, to some extent. He did not allow state affairs to enter into his private life. He was distinctly autocratic, doing exactly what he chose, and permitting no interference of any sort that was likely to be a stumbling block to what he had in view for an hour, for a day, or for a month. Naturally, most of his engagements were made for him. Every morning his secretary would go up to the private suite of His Royal Highness, a bed room and sitting room. In

the latter room stood a Stock Exchange ticker, giving quotations of every bourse in the world. The sitting room was more like a private office, containing a huge desk adorned by all the portraits of his family. The environment was simple but distinguished. In the bed room there was a little low iron bed, on which His Majesty slept. It was most unlike an apartment of the king.

In the outer corridor, of course, there were numerous pages walking up and down, being ready to announce any possible visitors. The private retinue of the Princess of Wales, now the Dowager Queen Alexandra of England, were all Danish. The retinue of the Prince of Wales were all German. These men, who were affable and well-bred servants, passed their lifetime with their Royal Highnesses. They were so devoted that one can hardly believe they were servants. The simplicity of the private apartments of royalty was certainly in great contrast to the magnificence of the reception hall and staircases of the palace. I recall once being obliged to wait rather a long time to see Her Majesty Queen Alexandra because it happened there was a great dinner party being given at the time. I was asked to share the good things of this royal banquet, and all the dishes which were passed

to the royal dining room, I tasted. I was served with the same food as the king and queen and their royal guests. It took all my moral force to escape the temptation of pocketing one of those exquisite little gold coffee cups with Apostle spoons and sugar tongs representing Medusa.

In my position as Court dressmaker I was, of course, given many privileges in certain opportunities to meet royalties, and I was once offered a large sum of money by a woman of social ambitions to sit in my fitting room for one day. The disguise would have been quite possible, but it was a trick which would have been considered *lèse-majesté*. There were many women in London society who seemed to be hemmed in, irresistibly restrained from great social position, but who were very rich.

There was Mrs. Claude W——, who had been one of the popular actresses at the Gaiety Theatre in London, in the time of Nellie Farren. She was a woman whose refinement of appearance would have made her an ornament of elegance and beauty to any society. She was quite admired by many of the cavaliers who surrounded His Royal Highness. She dressed most extravagantly, and I was told she owed her dressmaker in Paris at one time

over five thousand pounds. Of course her husband was the son of a rich brewer. He inherited millions, so that his wife lived in so lavish a manner that she was the talk of London, where, by the way, there was a great deal of extravagance. Colossal fortunes were spent on jewels and ornaments that dazzled the rich and the envious. The grand tier of boxes at Covent Garden during the opera season was quite as brilliant as the horse-shoe at the Metropolitan in New York. Most of the wealth of London society in these days, when the Prince of Wales revolutionised the customs of Queen Victoria, was represented by American women.

There was the daughter of Mrs. Bradley Martin, Lady Craven, whose jewels were superb, and who very often had with her her little friend, Mrs. Sam Newhouse, an American woman who had glorious pearls. People shot up the social ladder in London society at this time as fast as their money could lift them. Perhaps the example which His Royal Highness gave to society at this time made it a little more decadent. Under the mantle of Queen Victoria's reign there was no room for the liberties which were inaugurated by the prince. There were embarrassing moments, or at least opportunities for them in the rooms of a fashionable dressmaker,

Frequently, through mistake, a bill for a gown, not intended for the wife, would accidentally reach her. It might be for a copy of the identical gown which she was wearing.

Then there was that delightful little community that lived in St. John's Woods, the particular quarter in London where tired husbands telephoned their wives that they would be detained at the office. Deviltry was in the air, from the time the Prince of Wales took the reins of London society in his hands. It even demoralised such intellectual giants as Lord Beaconsfield and Mr. Gladstone. Gladstone had tremendous brain-power, several times refused the peerage, and had a home life of high ideals. He was, however, particularly fond of the ladies, and often stopped on his way home from parliament in front of a celebrated shop window in London, where the pictures of the reigning beauties were always in evidence. When Mrs. Asquith, who was Miss Tennant, was married, Mr. Gladstone wrote her a letter of congratulation which created a good deal of satirical comment.

"It is my fervent prayer," he wrote, "that you shall always be the recipient of as much love as it is possible for a gentleman to give you."

Mr. Gladstone was never a favourite of Queen

Victoria's, although she was a Tory, but kings and queens cannot show favouritism.

One man, however, stands out in my recollections of this early period of the Prince of Wales's social reign, the Duke of Northumberland. He was the tallest man in the realm, and founded a peculiar religious sect called Unionists. Their religious leaders were called Elders, and their doctrine was the enlightenment of charity and love in its purest form. The Duke of Northumberland was one of the most celebrated men of this time. Lord Percy, his eldest son, was accidentally killed in Paris. His mother was a sister of the late Duke of Argyle.

It is a world of perpetual change, and little remains of so many things in London which were talked about at that time.

CHAPTER VI

BRIDES AND WEDDING GOWNS OF THE COURT OF ST. JAMES

London in the early eighties was famous for the extravagance and daring of the *toilettes* worn by its beautiful women. It was at this time I made the *trousseau* of the only daughter of the Countess de Galve, the Honourable Mrs. Stanhope. It was the most extravagant *trousseau* that had been made in London up to that time, and many people came to get a glimpse of it. All the *lingerie* was trimmed with priceless real lace, and of each article there were six dozen. The bride was a beauty of an absolutely Russian type. She was very well formed, rather tall, and had many accomplishments. She painted well, she was a fine musician, a brilliant conversationalist. The wedding gown was of real lace, *point d'Alençon,* with forget-me-nots and lilies-of-the-valley. The bride's aunt, the Princess Souvaroff, appeared at the wedding in royal purple and orange velvet. She had been one of the famous beauties of the Second Empire.

Even the Prince of Wales came to look at and admire this marvellous collection of feminine creations, the news of their fabulous cost having reached his ears.

"Where in the world did you conceive these dainty impressions? What a happy mortal you must be to be allowed to study the beautiful things so near," said His Royal Highness.

The Countess de Galve, the bride's mother, was so delighted with the result of my work that in token of her appreciation she gave me a superb diamond and sapphire *marquise* ring. This *trousseau* was the most expensive I ever made, almost regal, for it ran into four figures.

It was shortly after this that I made the wedding gown for the two lovely daughters of the Countess of Leitrim, who were married within a day of each other. They were their Ladyships Winifred Renshaw and Lady Vivian. They were each of them different types of English beauty, but they were both tall, erect, and *distingué*. Their bridal gowns were of white satin *charmeuse,* with bridesmaids *en suite* in palest rose. They were married in St. Peter's Church, which is famous for its beautiful choir. Lady Vivian, soon after her marriage, became a widow, and I believe married again. Both

these girls were good sports, and had been wonderfully brought up to open air life. Their late father was a victim of the Irish feud, and was shot on their own property. Her Ladyship, the Countess of Leitrim, was a daughter of that celebrated sportsman, Lord Leicester. Her sisters all married peers of England. There is a romance attached to the history of Lord Leicester's eldest son, who disappeared from England and has never been heard of since. These mysterious cupboards that hold family skeletons are pretty liberally scattered among the rich and powerful.

The fame of these *trousseaux* spread, and it became the vogue for brides of this period to come to me. Among the many brides I prepared for the altar there was none more charming than the pretty Countess of Arran, a Dutch girl, who created quite a furore as a bride. She was the real type of Holland beauty, tall and blonde. Her husband was a great contrast to her, being a sturdy man, a typical country squire of the old style. She is living to-day upon her property in Ireland. She was a very democratic, congenial girl, spoke many languages very well, was a good horsewoman, and her favourite idea of colour in her mode of dress was pastel. She has become thoroughly English, her

mother being an English woman, the daughter of the late Sir Bowden of Australia, who was very wealthy. One exquisite *toilette* I made for her, I particularly remember, was of lilac *crêpe de chine,* trimmed with the most valuable Buckinghamshire lace. A court train gown of amethyst velvet lined with sura, trimmed with huge pansies and lilacs.

Among all the brides of my acquaintance, however, there was never one like Rachel Gurney, now the Countess of Dudley. She was an epoch-making bride.

Rachel Gurney was a beauty of the dark type, and a musician of note. She played the harp divinely, and had the most enchanting voice. She was comparatively poor and was brought up by the Marchioness of Tavistock, now Adeline, Duchess of Bedford, a most beautiful woman, who dressed always in perfect taste. Her sister, Laura Gurney, now Lady Trowbridge, who is much admired for her literary taste, was brought up by her Aunt, Lady Henry Somerset, well known in America. Their mother, who was a sister of the late Countess Somers, was also a real beauty. When through the business failure of her late husband, fortune proved fickle, she too entered the

QUEEN MARY

This photograph, showing Queen Mary in her magnificent Coronation Robe, was given to the author as an expression of Her Majesty's appreciation of her art. The gown was of satin, richly embroidered, and demanded the utmost originality and skill on the part of its designer.

field of fashion as a *modiste,* until she married again.

I shall never forget the excitement with which Lady Dudley rushed in upon me one day to decide upon a gown for her engagement supper party.

"Do tell me what I shall wear to-night," she pleaded.

The solution was a simple *mousseline,* with a *batiste* sash of orange. She was very dark, with a glorious figure, and she was an accomplished musician and linguist. Still, people were surprised that she should have made such a grand match with Lord Dudley, and there was a great deal of feeling of jealousy and envy.

Lillian, Countess of Cromartie, the mother of Lady Stuart Richardson, who made such a sensation in America in her barefoot dancing, was one of the most charming, delightful women whom I took the greatest delight in dressing. Neither Lady Stuart Richardson, her daughter, nor the younger Lady Cromartie, who married Major Blount, could ever hold a candle to their beautiful mother, Lillian, Countess of Cromartie. Even now, though her hair is perfectly white, she retains her fascinating dimples, and that wonderful skin of marble purity and whiteness. I should regard

her to-day as a singularly beautiful and attractive woman, with charming manners that have made her admired and adored everywhere. She was the daughter of the Lord of the Isle (MacDonald), a very old and historical family. She had a special photograph taken for me in one of my gowns, in appreciation of my talent.

Another lovely creature was the Countess of Faversham, the mother of that trio of famous beauties, the late Duchess of Leinster, Lady Howard Vincent, and Lady Marie Duncombe.

She had a personality that was very much above the average of English beauty. At a very early age her hair turned snow white, which gave her a proud and distant demeanour. Her natural reserve prevented many people in a measure from appreciating her, but my personal intercourse with her was always adorable. I made a court gown for her in a new shade at that time, known as *chaudron velvet,* almost copper-colour. It was trimmed with priceless lace, and the mantle that hung from both shoulders was of deep bronze velvet fastened with two huge rubies. She presented a very sensational appearance at Court, and King Edward complimented her most impressively. She sleeps now with other famous beauties who have passed away,

with her late husband, but there are many Dukes and Princes who have survived her, who are still singing her praises.

Those lovely English women were supreme, and one looks in vain to-day for such elegance and beauty. Those English women were famous for perfect poise.

Miss Agnes Keyser, known now as Sister Agnes, was always admired for her sylphlike figure. She used to be one of the most beautifully gowned women in London. Since the outbreak of the war she has spent her wealth lavishly in a good cause. To see her to-day in the simple but extremely becoming garb of a Sister of the Red Cross, one cannot help remembering how brilliantly she adorned the gay world of London. She has received numerous decorations, and she was among those celebrities who had entrée to King Edward's coronation. Her house in Grosvenor Gardens has been converted into a hospital for wounded soldiers.

Not far from me in Wilton Crescent, lived Mrs. G. K., who was devotedly admired by His Majesty King Edward VII. She was intellectual and fascinating long before she became celebrated at Court. After the birth of her first baby she sent to me for some tea gowns.

"Not too expensive, and as pretty as possible," was her message. I sent her several which pleased her, and in later years, when she did not need to economise so much, I had the pleasure of making her some very elaborate and beautiful costumes. She was a very *spirituelle* type, and of such brilliant wit that while it brought her the adoration of her friends it made many enemies for her. Her entertainments in her mansion in Grosvenor Place were thronged with smart and important people, who came to see and to be seen. It was of Mrs. George Keppel that the story was told of a bit of repartee aimed at her by a burglar.

It is claimed that she discovered a burglar in her bedroom one night.

"What are you doing under my bed?" she asked the burglar.

"I am looking for a sovereign," replied the burglar.

There are so many little anecdotes that one is tempted to spice this reminiscence food with, that might be as salt to the palate. I hope I may be forgiven for occasionally flavouring my story with them. One is naturally interested in anything that may bring us closer to those charming and beautiful women, who always improve upon acquain-

tance. But I must heed the advice of Lady Teazle in "School for Scandal," who, when she left the room, said:

"Ladies, I go, but I leave my character with you."

CHAPTER VII

A ROYAL LOVE AFFAIR

THE history of the great beauty and power over His Royal Highness of the beautiful Countess of W—— has been more or less inaccurately told, and, I may add, with more or less distortions. Among other women during the period of her reign, I knew her very well, and I am not among those who share the opinion that she was entirely cold blooded and vain in her devotion to His Majesty. She was herself an aristocrat, a woman of fine blood and feeling. Her father was an English officer, her mother of the English nobility. She had only one sister, not quite so distinguished, perhaps, as herself, but a woman who by marriage and her own right enjoyed a good deal of social prominence in London. Their father, who was one of the richest land owners in England, almost a triple millionaire, left them a large fortune, which they spent royally. The countess was extremely beautiful. As a young girl her complexion and her hair were

faultless. She had a perfectly divine figure, a most charming disposition, and was unusually clever and witty. Her husband, a peer in the realm and an officer of the Life Guards, was a very handsome man, of the dark type, and they made an ideal couple. Her son is now at the front. He too is married. Quite early in her career this beautiful woman was christened among her friends, "The Darling of the Gods." This is not so many years ago but perhaps it seems to be so because so many personalities and events have blurred the memories. The countess to-day is a very strikingly handsome woman, and has fully sustained the dignity of her past romance. I call it romance because I sincerely believe that it was. Aside from my own opinion, there is much reason for confirming it in the fact that Queen Victoria, the Duchess of Teck, in fact all the blood-ties of royalty, did their best to justify the affair on the grounds of unalloyed friendship. Queen Victoria received her very graciously at court, even when society at large did not treat her quite correctly. The Duchess of Teck said to me once, in reference to the *amour* of the beautiful countess and the late king, "There is nothing in all this scandal. He likes her very much, as he does many others,—and that is all."

As a matter of fact it is time that the truth about this romance be published. The fact is that the countess was very deeply attached to her sovereign, and he very deeply reciprocated her feeling. She became his constant companion, entirely by mutual desire, and wherever he went the countess would be asked also. There was a certain regardlessness about their constant companionship, and of course it so happened (as it always does happen among followers of royalty) that the society of the court pursued them with all the zest and curiosity of a pack of hounds on the hunt for prey. A romance between a king and a beautiful countess was considered big game, and in the midst of the gaieties in which they shared, they managed to watch, to draw conclusions, to bestow their criticism upon the two who were most concerned. The scandal, I believe, was largely created by those who make a specialty of it, although there were plenty of reasons for romantic gossip. Neither His Royal Highness nor the Countess seemed to pay the slightest attention to criticism which must have reached her if it did not influence him. We can take into account, with absolute assurance, the fact that they were intellectually companionable. Their social tastes were the same, their likes and dislikes

among people, places, and amusement were very similar. His Royal Highness was particularly fond of music, and there was a great deal of it at court. All through his life one of the Prince's chief pleasures was music. The countess really was a great musician, and this I think was a bond of sympathy and understanding between them. Her beauty was really so startling and so perfect that there were innumerable portraits in oil made of her by famous painters, and there were also many rude drawings and caricatures made for the benefit of her friends. These caricatures were not always of a character to inspire good taste,—but these artists did not attempt to immortalise her beauty in them, they were probably willing to leave that for others. One may cavil at the redundancy of treatment, at the flamboyant style in which some of these portraits were made, and one could smile at the weaker and puerile adulations suggested when the countess was painted in the form of some classic and symbolic figure, as a goddess perhaps. There was, of course, every excuse for these exaggerations because of the splendid opulence both of form and colour which she unassailably presented.

She was a luxurious beauty, with a fine taste in art. Her sumptuous castle was filled with ex-

quisite marble statuary. Her parties in the country were glorious. Her gardens were veritable retreats for Cupid, filled with grottoes, with yew trees, trimmed in all sorts of grotesque figures. A charming, restful spot. In her beautiful castle was a miniature theatre in case the peace of heaven which surrounded these beautiful gardens and the distant landscape should become tiresome to the guests. Usually, there was a delicious stillness in the air, broken alone by the songbirds in the shrubbery, or the music of the fountains in the distance. The castle itself became a show place, and people flocked to see it, especially when upon great occasion the grounds were gloriously illuminated. The people themselves, as royalty described them sometimes, the common people, paid the beautiful countess great homage. In fact, the ladies of the court, of her own age, and those of a more delightful old age, assumed a discreet ignorance of her many amours. The conversation about her was always associated with intellectual and literary qualities. The countess herself was a woman of many gifts. Her earlier years were passed in a married life that was unassailable, peaceful, cultivated. She was an out-door woman, a splendid horsewoman, and

she loved dogs. She was rather imperious, in fact insolent, sometimes, and intolerant.

Escoffier, the famous chef, who cooked so many remarkable dishes for the royal palace, was something of a philosopher. No doubt he saw a good deal of the real romance, for it was the custom of the king to go with the countess into the kitchen, to be tempted there by some mysterious invention of Escoffier's. It was on one of these occasions that Escoffier is credited with saying to His Majesty something that sounds cynical:

"God no doubt must have repented of having made man, but he could never have done so for having made woman," he said. I am told that the relations between these two wonderful world figures, the countess and the king, were really profoundly idealistic. His Majesty called the countess, "My heart," and the countess, in her most intimate mood towards the king, called him "My soul." They would take long walks together in the grounds of the castle, and at the end of the walk they would disappear into the kitchen, where Escoffier would give them extraordinary refreshment. Of course, the prince was delighted, entertained, and full of admiration for this beautiful woman. These were the days when she was in high favour. He was so

completely flattered that he ignored her little shortcomings, and listened sometimes to the amusing stories concerning gossip of the court, which he could tell better than anyone else. The people were talking a great deal at this time about His Royal Highness and the countess, and a good deal of this criticism must have disturbed her, for it affected the future of her son and her daughter. Still, to a certain extent, fearful of some outside influence that should bear down upon her and disturb her royal romance, she realised that she could not expect a moral inspiration from the illicit love affair with the king. Besides, she was so fond of admiration and of power, she was so dominant, and followed always the precepts of convention only in a spirit of defiance, that it was only in after years she realised perhaps that it would have been better had she chosen to be more moderate. Her keen intuition served her well in scattering the possible rivals of her romance as they came along. It was with reluctance she assumed this position in the battle of sentiment against other women. The misery of thought which the end of this romance brought to her is something that the world at large has not given her credit for. She was only defeated in her romance because owing to her rank and posi-

tion she wished to avoid public scandal. An aristocratic woman, she was also a loving woman, and because she was an aristocrat she dared not fret at the change which came over her romance, and she steeled herself against the disaster of time and years. There was not a more popular man in England than the Prince of Wales. He was kind-hearted to a fault, and in this weakness of virtue, his *liaison* with the countess became no longer so satisfactory. I am afraid His Royal Highness was a true butterfly of fashion.

There is perhaps no better proof of the sincerity and depth of feeling which the countess had for His Royal Highness, than the following anecdote, because it confirms the hurt which a woman feels when the man she loves fails in respect to her. It is recorded that His Royal Highness entered the room where she was, unannounced, and rather hastily.

"What on earth is the matter, sir, you frightened me," the countess said.

"I cannot be so particular," said the prince peevishly, and his brusque manner and conduct startled her. His manner was definite but distinctly without sentiment. He said to her something like this:

"You and I have always been great chums, and

you have been very good to me, thoroughly reliable, as sincere as any man friend could have been."

This was not the manner of love, and the countess, regarding it as a humorous mood, attempted to laugh it off.

"Why all these compliments, there must be another motive." She became restless, surmising what was to come. His Royal Highness rang for tea,—not a powerful restorative, but an excuse for boredom. Then, with a winning smile, he lighted a cigarette and began a course of conversation in which he had no doubt become expert through many previous experiences of the same sort. The countess displayed the disaster to her feelings which this situation created, and she also realised that her display of feeling was exasperating to His Royal Highness. It dawned upon her that sooner or later some great scandal would add to the bitterness of her disappointment, which he made clear to her. His Royal Highness left, and to a friend the countess described the shuddering loneliness which overcame her as she saw the beginning of the end. The crisis came soon. The countess started violent flirtations, knowing well that a famous actress had supplanted her. To His Royal Highness the incident was only one of many drawing

room intrigues, and served to give a little zest to his existence. Perhaps he may, or he may not have discerned the sincerity of her passion and her love for him, but he was coldly though charmingly irresponsive. I am sure that the countess thought in the prince she had met her fate, and in accepting the end of this romance, she expressed a gratitude for knowing that it had not been true before it was too late. Beautiful and idealistic as the motive of a woman in love may be, the failure of them always brings an ugly end. So the beautiful countess became the target of outrageous slander and unsparing scandal. Even after the separation had been generally known and accepted, even though misrepresentation and calumny had somewhat blurred the true memory, I believe that love such as these two felt was really a most uncommon devotion. Because of its truth and beauty, it created great jealousies, many misunderstandings among the stupid public, and the countess was obliged to suffer the revenge of the world against the woman who had been happy in spite of herself. Most of the stories were false, most of them were cruel lies, but how could they be denied? The countess did not see fit to give proof of these calumnies, nor would have deigned to do so.

I recall the many times it was my pleasure to see the beautiful countess in recent years, and she gave me the impression that she harboured no ill-will. She was perhaps cognisant of the fact that His Royal Highness, to say the least, had piqued her. She was also conscious that the field over which she had reigned with such personal pleasure and glory was now open to all comers. She retired most graciously, most gracefully. With fine diplomacy she poured oil on the troubled waters of her romance, but she was continually looking out for an occasion to revenge herself upon the woman who had supplanted her. The latter's only crime was to do exactly what His Royal Highness desired above all things, which the beautiful countess herself had so generously permitted. Then too, the countess really had no reason to challenge her rival's affection for the prince on grounds that she had deserted another man for him. The spirit of revenge, however, expressed itself violently one day in the hunting field adjoining the magnificent castle. Both the countess and her rival were in the party. It was a glorious autumnal morning, the air was crisp with that invigorating atmosphere. The countess was riding leisurely out of her grounds to the meet, when in the distance she saw

His Royal Highness talking and laughing, and especially attentive to his new love. For some time he had been bestowing his attention upon two peeresses but he had transferred them recently to the little marchioness who reciprocated his sentiment most graciously. It was this charming little court beauty whom the countess saw from a distance. She urged her horse furiously forward, and rode pellmell upon the marchioness. The horses clashed and the riding whips flung in the air just as the lances of old did their havoc among the warriors of England. His Royal Highness rushed between them, and after much difficulty succeeded in separating the ladies. The countess in a measure was defeated and the little marchioness had the field to herself. Some time later the marchioness lost her foot through an accident in a motor in Paris. I believe that this accident has not deprived her of her charm or her beauty. She still rides superbly, and was most happy and contented when I last saw her. The scar across her face which the countess' riding whip inflicted soon healed, but the scar in the heart of the countess still prevails, I fear. This episode considerably chastened the gossips, to say nothing of the spirit of the countess. But the marchioness also became extremely careful, for

the countess had made it clear that she would never forgive her rival's temerity.

The countess will remain in the memory of those who saw her from a distance, and of those who knew her well, as one of the most lovable creatures among the beautiful women of the Court of St. James. Of course, the exquisite laces and frou-frous which it was my privilege to create for the countess were of such an alluring character that they would have assured the surrender of any man, beggar or king. She affected clinging, filmy nothings of great price, and her charms were greatly enhanced by the least possible artifice of the dressmaker. She moved with such wonderful grace that her presence was always a sensation.

The footprints of great men who pursued the countess will probably never be entirely obliterated, although the winds of time have scattered them a little. She had a wild and vivid experience with great men who were stern but weak. She scalped most of them with supreme art. Who can tell what cards a woman plays, since she rarely plays them openly. The king of hearts may often be well hidden, or he may be the joker, or the knave; if the game was worth the candle, it does not matter. One thing I have observed that women of the

aristocracy who become involved in secret romance, hold their own better than any other class of women. The "fallen" aristocrat never steps from her pedestal of aristocracy, she never tumbles with broken bones, only with a few shattered illusions, which have not affected her self-respect.

Such a woman was the countess, whose sensational romance with the Prince of Wales made the world of gossip swing a little faster, especially the society world of London and of England.

Did they count the consequences, I wonder, or care about them?

I very much doubt it. Certainly His Royal Highness did not suffer very greatly, for his tastes had the surprising indifference of variety. In his romantic episodes one could easily take him for Henry IV or Louis XIV. None of the women of the Court of St. James, whom I gowned, frequently for the special delight of His Royal Highness, were comparable for inspiration to the beautiful countess. It was like receiving an order to fill the heart as well as the eye of the king, to prepare the beautiful countess in a *toilette* he would admire. One gown I remember in particular because His Royal Highness pronounced it as the prettiest bit of daintiness the countess ever wore. It was the most

superb Duchess satin of grey pearl with a corsage *à la Louis XV* in the palest rose colour *miroir* velvet. Square collar of *batiste* with an edging of *point de Flanders,* and the *corsage* was held with buttons of coral and diamonds. The *ceinture* was of black *moire souple.* With this Her Ladyship wore a large picture Leghorn hat trimmed with a garland of (Baroness de Rothschild) roses, grey *suède* shoes with diamond buckles *à la Cromwell,* a parasol entirely made of rose leaves, with a handle of corals, and her monogram in diamonds on the stick. Her *mantelet* was indeed wonderful, it was entirely of grey pearl *chiffon ninon,* the entire lining being rose leaves which fluttered in the wind and when walking gave the most wonderful effect. She certainly looked superb. I copied it for another *grande dame* of the Court in white and lilac. Of course, the wearer of this second edition was less interesting but more important, if such a thing could be possible.

A tea gown which I made for the Countess was perhaps the most beautiful thing I ever put forth from my house. It was a copy adopted from Queen Victoria's coronation *toilette.* The undergarment was in the finest white *crêpe de chine* with

an overmantle of the finest Burano lace with embroideries of topaz, opals and chains of pearls, with a clasp, which held the mantle on the breast, of emeralds, turquoise, rubies and uncut sapphires.

CHAPTER VIII

AUTHORS AND ACTORS OF KING EDWARD'S REIGN

Musical comedy has been the nursery of many peerages, the cradle of many aristocratic wives who were chosen from the chorus. The ballet and the refined burlesque were the theatrical food upon which the aristocracy of England flourished.

There are still many who remember those stars of the earlier days of the Prince of Wales. There were Nellie Farren, Lydia Thompson, Violet Cameron, Florence St. John, Letty Lind. To these meteors of this early period of the theatre within my recollection, were applied the slang compliments of the period. These ladies were, for instance, "Tophole," they were "Swishy." It was one of the joys of life to hear them sing and dance such little ditties as:

"I am a swell,
You can tell,
And behave, of course, as such.

Close cut hair,
Elbows square,
With my toothpick and my crutch."

It was after the theatre that those delightful little supper parties were held at Cremorne Garden, or at the Argyle Rooms. At these parties the Prince of Wales would attend incognito.

Later, when he was king, and the formalities of his rank had to be fulfilled, his aide-de-camp would wire or telephone to the box office, and the royal box would be reserved for him. Usually it was decorated with a bouquet of flowers, so that the public always knew at once that the performance would be graced by the king and queen, or the royalty. At Covent Garden, where grand opera was given, there was always a royal box exclusively reserved, and the omnibus box, as it was called, where His Majesty invited all his intimate friends to join him or call upon him between the acts. The king was always most punctilious to arrive at the beginning, and to remain till the end. But the opera had always been the centre of social glory and splendour, whether in London or in New York.

I am convinced that modern beauty will never compare favourably with those regal ancestors of

hers, who passed in and out of my *salon* in the House of Frédéric. It is my regret, that one no longer encounters those convincing beauties of elegance and charm of the last century, who remain so vividly in my mind.

I observe to-day that the rage for beauty, vulgarly expressed, is "flapper" type. They at least do not require much study to gown them. The immature and inchoate baby type is far from convincing, and requires little exertion from an artist in dress. In America the "flapper" type has perhaps been more fully recognised than in Europe. American taste in dress seems to pander to all the senses, keeping in view the fads and fancies of the hour, leaving what might be called the real artistic business of dress to take care of itself. Perhaps the theatres have something to do with this deterioration of good taste and beauty. Years ago, even chorus girls in such plays as the famous Gaiety Theatre in London provided, were aristocratic in appearance. Many of them married into the British aristocracy, but the "flapper" type was not among them.

I remember well in the early eighties, when the artists of the Comédie Française first came to London, when Molière came to salute Shakespeare.

What a bouquet of glorious women!

The divine Sarah, willowy and slender, with her golden voice, appeared in "Phèdre," wearing those pure white robes draped in classical folds. She impressed herself upon my mind as a classical figure. I never could or would admit that she looked as well in modern garments as in her gorgeous Greek or Roman vestments. Her whole personality seemed to change with modern dress; that subtle, glorious, sphinx-like movement, seemed hampered in up-to-date lines.

The divine Sarah, though the greatest actress in the world, has her weaknesses and her shadows. She is absolutely one of the most extravagant and most marvellous creatures of the century. Nothing daunted her; lions and tigers were her companions, for years she travelled with her coffin. These may be fictitious facts, but they establish her originality and capability. She designed most of her gowns herself. They were scrupulously carried out under her direction. The embroideries, for instance, of her darling "Fédora" were really great works of art. I saw them in the making at a famous embroidery house in Paris, where I had gone to choose some designs. The "Fédora" gowns were exquisite, the jewels alone used in them

being valued at 20,000 francs. One gown was designed exactly upon the principle of a Cardinal's vestment. In private life, Sarah is as emotional as she is on the stage. She adores her son, whose father, it is said, is a Prince. Every one knows how intensely patriotic the great actress is, and when the Kaiser finally succeeded in persuading her to come to Berlin, she could not restrain her feelings.

"Of course," she said, "great minds must meet sooner or later."

How well these great minds each have played their part, how fantastically they are the creatures of wonder of the age! Both have stirred the hemisphere, one upon the stage in theatrical drama, and one upon the world's stage in a stupendous drama in history. Who will receive the greatest applause of humanity at large when these two world figures make their final bow?

You must forgive me the little cynicisms that will creep into my narrative, in spite of all I can do to restrain criticism. Perhaps I dwell too much upon personality, expect too much of it, but I speak from experience and not surmise.

The animal charm of Croizette, one of the beauties of the Comédie Française, excited an extravagance in dress that I deplored. Her physique, en-

hancing as it did her *toilettes,* created extravagant admiration of her among a class of women who dwell upon dress and its accessories as a sort of sacrament of beauty, a religion. Croizette married the rich banker, Monsieur Jules Stern, which was a desirable apotheosis to her brilliant life, but she was always too extravagant. All women are not in position to give full swing to their extravagance, and therefore Croizette was a visible temptation to them. There are many women for whom simple garments are more refined than the spectacular clothes, and yet not less costly. A piece of *point de Flanders* or *point de Venise,* an old world *batiste* used as a *fichu,* with a *taupe crêpe de chine* gown, will often run to three figures.

Most of these women of the Comédie Française were really great artists, however, and one cannot speak of them with anything but a sense of gratitude for their devotion to their great work.

There was Madame Baretta, charming Baretta, the tragic death of whose only son practically ended her career. She withdrew from the world after this, and lived only a few years longer, to the sorrow of those who adored her.

As my establishment was in London, it was my privilege, naturally, to gown many of the cele-

brated English actresses of to-day and yesterday.

Lady George Alexander, wife of Sir George Alexander, of the St. James Theatre, London, was a delight to a dressmaker, because she had the greatest talent for dress herself. When she was still Mrs. George Alexander, and together we were choosing the colour schemes and styles for a new production, she always had abnormally bright ideas of her own, which happily enough we were able to carry out to perfection. She always dressed exquisitely; it was inherited from her French blood, and her influence dominated the good clothes of the numerous plays that were so successfully produced at the St. James Theatre.

Lady Alexander would spend days in my establishment, rummaging over the most lovely materials, laces, embroideries, embroidered *batistes* and trimmings. These were very hilarious occasions for us both, and our laughter very often disturbed one or another of the grand ladies waiting in my reception room, and who were formally and patiently awaiting their turns to be attended to.

Miss Marion Terry, I recall also as one of my very charming customers, Miss Eva Moore, Miss Granville, and Miss Julie Opp, who were all members of the company at the St. James Theatre.

Sir George Alexander came over himself one day to see me, and paid a very graceful compliment when he said that he understood why Her Ladyship spent so much time with me.

It was in the early eighties that Lady Beerbohm Tree, then Mrs. Tree, first came to me. She was then not quite so distinguished in her style and mode as she is to-day, but I remember she liked my gowns. To-day her great friends, the Duchess of Rutland and Lady Marjorie Manners, have adopted styles of individual gowning, which have failed to convince the modern woman, however, who is apt to consider them eccentric.

The success of the gowns I made for the production of Oscar Wilde's play, "Lady Windermere's Fan," in London, brought about an overwhelming business for me in the theatrical world. This was a production made at the Haymarket Theatre by Sir Beerbohm Tree. Lady Tree was one of those esthetic looking women, with a very definite individuality. Neither of her daughters resemble her in the least. Her eldest daughter, I understand, has returned to the stage, notwithstanding the fact that she married well, and for love.

Miss Fay Davis and Miss Granville, of St. James Theatre, were among the beauties of dis-

tinctly English style. Miss Davis, who was very *distingué* looking, became a very great favourite in London, acting many years for St. George Alexander. The gowns I created for her she wore with a great deal of distinction. I can still see her in a white tulle ball gown, very full, with fringes of iridescent pearls showered like dewdrops. Miss Granville made a sensation in a princess robe of orange velvet *mousseline* embroidered with diamonds. I subsequently made a copy of this gown, which I designed for Miss Granville, for Her Majesty the Queen of England, in blue Sèvres and variegated blue stones.

Pretty little Eva Moore, who married Henry Esmond, the playwright (perhaps because she knew that he would write such charming plays for her), was a spoiled child of the English theatre-going public, as were her sisters. She was very dainty and very pretty. I remember trying on a little grass-green linen gown I had made for her, to be worn in her husband's play, "The Wilderness."

"They will surely make a meal of me," she said laughingly.

"Yes," I said, "if you dare to go too near the

footlights they might take you for a delicious cabbage in cream."

I believe that Eva Moore in a little linen lawn tennis gown which she so well knew how to wear, really made me celebrated.

I shall always feel that I contributed something to the success of a great prima donna, Madame Albani, at Covent Garden, in that brilliant first performance of Verdi's "Othello" in which she appeared with the athletic tenor, Tamagno. Her *toilettes* were gorgeous, the embroideries alone costing over two hundred guineas. The tea gown of pure lace du Burano, worn when the Moor comes to her couch in jealousy to slay the fair Desdemona, was very beautiful. Tamagno apologised to me afterwards for crushing it.

"It was really too lovely to smother her in it," he said. "I hesitated, for her lines were so exquisite. I hated to be so treacherous, but it had to be done, though I treated your work very gently."

Even a Moor of Venice can be chastened by such a beautiful dress.

Two other great artists in the theatrical world in London, whom I remember so well, were Ellen Terry and Lady Bancroft. Many of us can remember what a really versatile, clever, charming

actress Lady Bancroft (Marie Wilton) was. When she appeared in "Diplomacy," London raved about her. The Prince of Wales always attended the opening of the Bancrofts. She was not exactly pretty, but very magnetic. It was Lady Bancroft and her husband, Sir Squire Bancroft, who made the Haymarket Theatre famous.

She was notoriously difficult to please, but somehow or other I always scored with her. She was fond of me, and only last year I received a letter from her country seat near Folkestone. I remember once a session with her which lasted five long hours, during which we discussed a certain colour scheme. At the end of it we drove to the theatre, and saw how the furniture and the hangings of the scenes would harmonise with the proposed gown. Lady Bancroft being rather short in stature, it was often difficult to carry out satisfactorily her own plans for her *toilettes*. However, she didn't mind the trouble she unconsciously caused. When the gown was completed, she would say quite pleasantly:

"If you don't mind, dear, we will change it a little."

Changing it a little meant a complete reconstruction of the gown, and yards of silk, velvet, lace

and embroidery went the way of all that is mortal. Yet, one did please her after all, if one didn't oppose her too much.

The Bancrofts' home in Berkeley Square, London, was rather curious. Their whole staircase was lined with caricatures of all the celebrities of their long reign in London. Du Maurier, *Punch's* great artist, is responsible for most of them. Sir Squire Bancroft, a tall figure with snow-white hair, with his inevitable monocle in his eye, is still a striking personality in London. One of their sons died in China, having married a daughter of the famous Kembles. I believe the marriage was not a happy one, for they were divorced.

Lady Bancroft is a devout Catholic, most charitable, and has done a great deal for the cause of the Allies. She still holds her own, is still satirical, witty and *spirituelle.* Her fame has not vanished, although she retired from the stage some years ago. She still often plays for charity.

When the automobile was not so much in evidence, you could meet the Bancrofts, like Darby and Joan, driving in their victoria, drawn by two nice Irish cobs. England has never been able to replace Mrs. Bancroft. She had her own peculiar style, convincingly serious, screamingly funny, and

versatile. Even Queen Victoria, I believe, sent for them to give private performances at Balmoral, and King Edward was one of the earliest admirers of Her Ladyship, remaining a very true and staunch friend always. The Prince of Wales Theatre was where Lady Bancroft became famous, before leasing the Haymarket Theatre.

Ellen Terry, the paragon of English tragedy, the sweet Juliet of Irving's Romeo, stirred London, and for that matter America, for years. We are contemporaries, and we have met on and off the stage for many years. Her sliding movement when she greets you, her alluring, bewitching smile, have not really altered. She has been, I believe, a happy woman, and all the homage and all the adoration she has received, never spoiled her. Her daughter and her son are both great artists, classic designers, having staged many pieces of the Greek and Roman cult. Ellen Terry comes of a wonderful family, for among them are many of the shining lights of the English stage. She herself was perhaps the most graceful figure on any stage.

Her garments were always part of her, her flowing robes (for she never wore a corset), her gliding movements, sylph-like in their grace, always gave me the impression that when she walked she

never touched the earth. She moved so stealthily, so quickly, and yet with such perfect modulation. Creating gowns for Ellen Terry was always an easy matter for me. She would come to my studio, stretch out on the couch, and say to me:

"Now, dear, what shall I wear?"

"Well, it is difficult to say, will you please stand up until we try some effect?" I would say.

"No, dearie, just hang some material around, so that I can look at it, and when I see something that strikes my imagination I will get up."

Often she would take the scissors out of the fitter's hands.

"Let me show you," she would say, and that would end it.

She was angelically sweet, never out of temper, erratic in the extreme, but a charming woman. Whatever I created for her was always a joy to me, for I knew I was garbing an artist, a superb woman.

Those piquant little stories of her early life may have some truth in them or may not. We are all well aware that the greater our success, the greater the number of our enemies. I presume that is her case. I know that the great grief of her life came

when Sir Henry Irving and she severed a life-long friendship.

I shall always maintain that it was Ellen Terry who made Irving famous. It was she who called forth the divine fire in him, which was certainly dormant until she fanned the flickering flame into a bright and shining light. For doing this, it seems to me ingratitude was her fate, as it is with many others. The fickleness and vagaries of fortune beset many of us, and Ellen Terry was no exception. I love her very much, she is such a human, kind creature, and I wish her well to the end of the chapter.

One cannot leave this period of extraordinary genius in the English theatre without referring to Mr. and Mrs. Kendal, to Harry Montague, the ideal of young hearts, Ada Lewis, Hugh Conway, and many others. Mrs. Kendal was always spoken of in whispers, because one always feared saying something that would shock her exquisite sensibilities. She was rather a tall, majestic-looking woman, when she was Madge Robertson. She and her husband played together for so many years that one never dreamed of separating them by thought or word. Mrs. Kendal's favourite stage trick was to turn her back to the audience, for in

evening dress she had a very beautiful back. Mr. Kendal, I believe, must have been a sort of Egyptian sphinx inwardly, because he was never known to express an opinion, or to speak to another woman except his wife. He was very handsome, but I am sure he never would have dared to suggest appearing with any other actress, save his wife, for it would have been the worse for him, so active was the green-eyed monster in the heart of beautiful Madge Kendal. There was never a word of criticism concerning the purity and domestic perfection of their lives.

I believe that Madge Robertson really made an actor of Mr. Kendal; at any rate, he learned everything he knew about acting from her. I have also always thought that Ellen Terry, that supple, cobra-like woman, made Sir Henry Irving. She adored him and always quoted him as her guiding star. Perhaps he was, but I do not share her opinion. In later years he devoted a good deal of time to that little woman who wrote for *Vanity Fair*. It was a decided decadence in good taste, she was such a direct contradiction to the marvellous personality of the great *tragédienne*.

It took some little time before King Edward showed any interest in the Alexanders at the St.

James Theatre, but he was finally induced to patronise it from time to time by Her Royal Highness the Duchess of Fife.

Of course, many of us to-day remember that exquisite woman Ada Cavendish, who made such a sensation in a version of Wilkie Collins' "The New Magdalen." The Prince of Wales in his younger days greatly admired her. She married Captain Marshall, the playwright. People were much more eager for the theatre in those days than they are now; it was before the horrible advent of those terrible moving pictures. I remember the crowds that used to go to the Prince of Wales Theatre in Oxford Street, to see those fine actors, Rignold, Warner, Wilson Barrett, in those spectacular melodramas once so dear to the British heart. Then there was William Terriss, that handsome actor who was stabbed to death by a madman at the stage door of the Adelphi Theatre one night in London, where he had been making an enormous success in an English melodrama called "Harbour Lights." His pretty daughter, Ellaline Terriss, who married Seymour Hicks, danced herself into favour with the king in a foolish little ditty called "A Little Bit of String." She is still a great favourite with the theatre public.

I cannot fail to mention Fred Terry, Ellen Terry's brother, and his charming wife, Julia Neilson. Her beauty was indeed ravishing. Then there was Cyril Maude, who, with his clever wife, pleased London with his smug smartness in comedy. Who can forget Oscar Asche and Lily Brayton, his wife, in their magnificent production of "Kismet." One could write a volume about the English actors and actresses of my period in London, but I have mentioned only those who received royal favour.

A number of English actresses who married in the peerage, and a number of peers' sons who went on the stage, have perhaps been responsible for the impression that King Edward regarded the theatre as part of the fashion of the court. This is entirely erroneous, because although His Majesty was always courteous, and personally rather fond of the players, he never allowed an actress to be presented at court. I doubt whether he approved of the theatre as a profession, in spite of the fact that several of the chorus girls of the Gaiety Theatre married into the peerage. The Marchioness of Headford, for instance, was formerly on the program of the Gaiety Theatre as Rosie Booty. Lady Victor Paget, the late Countess Clancarty, the

Marchioness of Aylesbury, belonged to the chorus. Then there was Lilly Elsie of "Merry Widow" fame, who became Mrs. Ian Bullough, Miss Clifford, who became The Honourable Bruce, and lost her husband in the beginning of the war (he was the son of Lord Aberdeen), and Lady Carrington, now a widow, all belonged to the variety stage. There were enormous possibilities for the beautiful coryphées of the English stage, young girls of all sorts and conditions. Some of them were from the slums of the East End, and they gathered even thousands in the transit of art. The stage favourites of London always had the entrée to many smart sets, but I believe King Edward, who was most fastidious, respecting etiquette, drew the line very sharply between court life and the stage. Notwithstanding his laxity in minor details respecting the weaker sex, he was very strict in other details.

Among the social lions connected directly or indirectly with the theatre, were the authors, famous and infamous, of that day. I knew many of them well. Particularly do I remember Ouida, that woman of sublime imagination, who wrote "Strathmore," "Moths," "Under Two Flags."

She was occupying a royal suite in the then very famous and much frequented Langham Hotel in

the Portland Place, one of the most beautiful thoroughfares in London. Her mother was with her and would never allow her to be disturbed on any pretext while writing. Her favourite mode of dressing was in yellow silk, quite *décolleté*. From her many admirers among the Crack Regiments she chose as her *beau idéal* a handsome Life Guardsman, a peer of the realm, after whom she moulded most of her heroes. Her story-book women were always bad, frivolous, even worse than that. I once hinted to her, somewhat audaciously at the manner in which she dealt with the weaker sex.

"My dear, let me tell you, there are no good women excepting those who are made so by men," she said.

How ghastly, I thought, to be inured to such a cynical opinion of one's sex. She wrote with wonderful descriptive power, and her vivid conceptions of human nature were very true to life, yet, poor soul, she died heart-broken and poor, though her star of life was once one of the most brilliant in the horizon of her day. Her last years were the winter of fiction.

In appearance, Ouida looked like a gypsy. She was very dark, with deep-set eyes that had a peculiar far-away look. She affected gowns of gypsy

Romany style which suited her very well. She was very antagonistic to the modern woman, and it was part of her nature to never allow them to shine when she was present. I believe, however, I was very favourably looked upon by her. She adored her two collies, Cæsar and Minks, who were always with her. She talked to them like human beings.

"My canine friends are real," she used to say, "the others are chimera."

In a measure I believe she was right. In her lap the little Pomeranian she claimed inspired her. Her soul understood the language of these dogs well. She was charitable and human in the extreme, though grotesque at times in her *toilettes*.

Of the many literary celebrities I met, I shall never forget the little talks we used to have with the Poet Laureate, Lord Tennyson, whom we used to meet at a little café in Regent Street, in London, where the poet used to come to sip his *café noir*. The usual attractions of youth were still with me then, and being a poet perhaps, he was still susceptible.

"People are often so uncharitable," I said to him. He paused a minute before answering me, and with that ambiguous smile for which he was noted, he finally said:

"Scandal is like an oyster knife that hacks and hews the will, but not the power to abuse."

Tennyson was rather tall, he wore his hair unusually long, and the most predominant thing about him was his intellectual, broad forehead. His eyes were rather large, his eyebrows very prominent, he had a very sympathetic manner, and he was exceptionally gallant. Frequently with my best friend, "my late husband," we would stroll together from the little café on our way home, listening to this genius, for that he was unmistakably. I fail to see any resemblance to him in his son.

Mrs. Craigie (Oliver Hobbs) wrote several charming plays which delighted the entire royal family. Especially charmed were they with her play called "Some Emotions and a Moral." It created quite a sensation, especially as the authoress was very young, and, of course, some surprise at the cynical tone of the play. Her romance began when she was only sixteen. Appearing in an amateur performance, she met a young American who had just come over, and immediately became engaged to him. He was very good-looking, and he played the part of a Naval officer. She believed that she was in love, married him, and her married life proved to be a failure. She divorced him. She

had a charming son, who was educated by his grandparents, and served his country at the front.

Pearl Morgan Richards, who became Mrs. Craigie, was a wonderfully bright and witty woman. She had a streak of perpetual sarcasm, and yet her wit made you love her at once. She had beautiful eyes, and a very lovely hand. She was a great friend of Lord and Lady Curzon, and went to the Durbar as their guest. That was the late Lady Curzon, who was Miss Leiter of Chicago. They were intimate and charming friends, and the curtain of time has fallen on both of them.

CHAPTER IX

THE MODERN SPIRIT OF KING EDWARD'S RULE

At the close of Queen Victoria's reign, the restlessness which Her Majesty's conservative policy at court had so long restrained, began to take active measure. The popularity of the Prince of Wales, whose accession to the throne seemed to be interminably deferred, had instilled a more modern spirit among the aristocrats and the beautiful women, of which there were so many in England at this time. There were indications of this in such gala events during the latter part of Queen Victoria's reign, as the great ball at Warwick Castle, given by the beautiful Countess of Warwick. She was in high favour at that time with the Prince of Wales, whose patronage of beauty was well known. It was my privilege to make most of the gowns, the *lingerie,* even the *robes de nuit* of this famous court beauty. She was the most ravishing English beauty of her time, and is still a vision of loveliness to-day.

It was at this famous ball at Warwick Castle, that the Countess of Warwick wore an entirely new suggestion for a ball dress. I think I was the first to introduce the fashion, which has since been widely copied. It was the blending of fur with *tulle*. The gown worn by the Countess of Warwick was a rose *tulle* ball gown, with narrow sable borders.

Shall I ever forget that ball!

The immense ball room in that historical old Castle Warwick was filled with the most glorious exotic flowers. Palms, wonderful bushes of clematis, tea roses, violets, white lilacs, all intermingled with lilies-of-the-valley. The general effect was one of a modern saturnalia. The parterre floor shone like a looking-glass. It was smooth as polished metal. Huge subdued rose tinted lights gave a dull soft hue to everything. Armies of footmen in their gorgeous livery of the earl's household made one think almost of the great ball that preceded Waterloo. All the leading County families and their daughters were present, and His Royal Highness, the Prince of Wales, opened the ball with the Countess, who was an ideal woman for an ideal ball gown. The glorious *manteau* of velour *miroire doublée* in chinchilla, which she wore, was the fin-

ishing touch that startled everybody. The *manteau* was finished with a sable collar.

She ruled supreme upon the horizon of fashion for a very long time, and I had the pleasure of making for her superb *liseuse* and tea gowns of a daring description. Her *robes de nuit,* in *nînon rose,* black, and *vert d'eau* profusely trimmed with real Valenciennes made her look like a Louise de Lavallière. She was a woman of such exquisite form.

The Countess of W. was one of my earliest, and by far the most encouraging inspiration. It was for her that I devised many daring effects. I recall adapting Queen Victoria's coronation gown into a picture tea gown for the Countess of W., of lace *nînon* with pearl trimmings. Her Majesty Queen Victoria would have been surprised to see how much her coronation gown looked like a tea gown. Then there was an Empire tea gown of blond lace. It is a lace which is so transparent that if used on a light tissue the effect is that of a blond *chevelure.* It is mostly made in the Ardennes, and few people know how to employ this beautiful lace to advantage. It is as delicate as cobweb, with opalescent shades, when draped over any material of suitable texture. I have always been very successful in using it.

There was no end to the original effects that

were possible for a woman of the physical splendour of the Countess of W. I was very proud of an opera cloak which I made for her, which attracted wide attention at the time, and which I believe no other woman could have worn. It was a regal wrap of fine white cloth, smothered with coarse Guipure, disclosing Persian embroidery and lined with rose and gold.

It was in such women as the Countess of W. that the Prince of Wales confirmed his prediction of a new and more brilliant fashion when he should become king. I shall always feel that King Edward VII was the arbiter of the brilliant styles which he admired. I feel that he dictated to the English women of fashion, for his taste was that of a grand Seigneur. He was very original, and created about him an atmosphere which inspired a startling quality. He always adapted himself to his surroundings. It didn't matter whether His Majesty was at Ascot, or Derby, at a horse show, at the opening of Parliament or at a *salon*. King Edward always gave a personal tone to those about him. What he said and what he did were quoted at professional clubs. His *bon mots* were adopted everywhere, for he was extremely witty, cynical at times, but full of wonderful good nature. King Edward was

really a very great diplomat; his diplomacy was of a quality that would have been an immense value in temporising the conditions which brought about the war.

With the accession of His Majesty, King Edward VII, and Queen Alexandra to the throne, dress was no longer so conventional, it became more free and easy. The King and Queen seemed to be, as you would say over here, more up to date. To be sure, the Court Drawing Rooms were still held in the day time, but the balls, the concerts at Buckingham Palace, were less formal and tiresome. The usual list of people one met at these Court functions was much changed. There were not so many bores at the palace as there were during the *régime* of Queen Victoria. Of course, there were those who deplored the fact that society was becoming flippant. A great many of us regarded this new freedom in dress, in talk, as a great relief.

The first years of the reign of King Edward VII were very brilliant socially. The whole atmosphere of social conditions in London became charged with the joviality and wit of the King himself. He was a great admirer of beautiful women, and he encouraged their presence at the British court with every possible sign of favour. In presence and per-

sonality he was a real charmer, the ladies all adored him. His intimates called him "Teddy." He was the best groomed cavalier of his day, the Beau Brummel of his century. Both the King and the beautiful Queen Alexandra came into power with the love and esteem of their millions of subjects. They were as much adored by the man in the streets as by the aristocracy, the dowagers, and the younger generation of their reign. I always believed that His Majesty was even more popular in Paris than in London. It is generally conceded that the *entente cordiale* was established by King Edward VII so firmly, that no other power could disturb the alliance. King Edward still lives, we do not realise that he is dead, so remarkable is the influence of his spirit over the affairs of England. When people speak of a delightful man, of a good King, they remember Edward VII.

As Princess of Wales, and later as Queen Alexandra, this beautiful woman was always famous for her exquisite taste in gowns. It was really an inborn quality with her. Her Majesty has always been considered the best dressed woman in England. I say this, having some personal knowledge of how the court beauties of her day envied her; envy is such a frequent intruder upon the dressmaker's

career. Thousands strive to copy Her Majesty's gowns, her hats, her *coiffure,* but they were all just spurious imitations. Even to-day, having reached the years when one is less likely to be observed in the matter of dress, Her Majesty remains the most elegant of women, the most royal of all the Queens of the last century.

My acquaintance with Queen Alexandra was of many years. I assisted in the direction of her gowns before she was Queen of England, and long after that. The privileges that came to me as *modiste* to royalty were not merely a formal obedience to royal commands. A queen being measured for a gown, is still a woman. The atmosphere of the queen's bed-chamber, however, is something that is indescribably different.

It may be that one associated some mysterious superiority to the personality of a queen, because she is queen. At any rate I shall always recall my visits to the bedroom of Queen Alexandra with the same sentiment that any other woman would, who enjoyed the same privilege.

The Queen's bed-chamber was a huge, square bedroom, with a very high ceiling. It was a unique apartment, for there was nothing modern about it. Its huge four-poster bedstead was awe-inspiring,

and the various old oak chests of a former period, the couches, the chairs, were all of the early English period.

A large crucifix hung over Her Majesty's bed, and the real lace coverings upon which were woven the royal escutcheon, were very beautiful and elegant. Adjoining the bedroom was the queen's boudoir, a lovely nest, in which Her Majesty put aside her crown, and presumably put on her slippers.

Beside her dressing table, upon which were the usual toilet accessories, but of pure gold, stood a mahogany case, with an open glass inlaid front. Inside this case, all symmetrically arranged, were the queen's personal jewels. Among them were the most lovely *parures* of diamonds, pearls, rubies, sapphires, onyx, in fact the entire galaxy of beautiful stones and jewels so placed in the cabinet as to be ready for wear, to match any gown.

The bedroom screen was a very unique bit of furniture. It contained a multitude of photographs, inserted in panels, of the young generation of all the reigning families of Europe, and of all royalty. These photographs were framed in white wooden arabesque, which made them stand out beautifully. If the political masters of Europe could have had a glimpse at this wonderful album of photos in

Queen Alexandra's boudoir, and realise, as they would have done, how tender and how close the international relations of Europe were, by actual bond of social relationship, it is possible some of them would want to hide behind that screen in view of what is happening now, to hide themselves from the political shame of the present war.

That Her Majesty might survey at her ease the *toilettes* she was to wear, a huge gown-rack stood beside the dressing-table, upon which various gowns could be displayed, so that Her Majesty could comfortably choose the one she preferred to wear.

There was an atmosphere about the Queen's boudoir of quiet dignity, of perfect order, of peace of mind. The windows of her boudoir looked out upon the velvet lawn, the orderly footpaths of the palace grounds, and huge oak trees cast their shadows nestling at the windows of this exquisitely appointed royal chamber. Of course, there were mementoes of all sorts of things, little knick-knacks that were probably personal souvenirs. Most prominently displayed in the room, however, were large photographs of all the royal children of the queen, who were then grown up. I recall one especially beautiful photograph, taken of Her Majesty as a bride, upon her entrée into London; a speaking likeness

of Queen Victoria and the Prince Consort; a charming picture of the Duke of Clarence. And then there was a host of relatives, beautifully framed and too numerous to mention.

The most impressive recollection of the Queen's bedroom to me was that huge crucifix which hung immediately over Her Majesty's pillow. It indicated the glorious or melancholy fact that she was queen "By the Grace of God." Many wonderfully happy, and many tearful nights, Her Majesty must have passed in the shadow of this crucifix.

Queen Alexandra, like most of her royal ancestry, was a strict church-goer. Her influence upon her own children in this respect was very great. I remember when Canon Duckworth awaited her wishes as to the music for the funeral of her son, the Duke of Clarence, she said to him:

"His favourite hymn was 'Safe in the Arms of Jesus.'"

Her Majesty was intensely feminine, as the following anecdote will confirm. It was when she was Princess of Wales and was preparing to go to Berlin to assist at the funeral ceremony of Kaiser Friedrich. I was summoned to Marlborough House to be there in case any advice was needed in some crisis concerning the gowns of Her Royal

Highness. The scene is as vivid to me to-day as then.

The train was already waiting for the royal travellers at Victoria Station. Her Royal Highness was busy, applying those last touches that every woman seems to think of only at the last minute, when the Prince of Wales opened the door of the room. I can see him, as he stepped back in amazement, when he saw that the princess was wearing a cloak which had no crepe trimming. It appeared, though I shall never believe it, that Her Royal Highness didn't know that it was necessary for her to wear crepe.

"But, my dear," remonstrated His Royal Highness, very gently, "it is essential."

Speedily my acolytes were sent hurrying to my house, and when they returned with the crepe we sewed it on the cloak, while Her Highness patiently stood up. I shall never forget the charming presence of the late Duke of Clarence (Cuffs and Collars, as he was called). He was leaning on the mantelpiece, doing his best to be formally solemn, to suppress his laughter. I think we all of us in the room only managed to keep serious with the greatest difficulty. And yet, the beautiful princess

seemed serenely unconscious that she was keeping anybody waiting.

It was at Marlborough House, during the Jubilee of Queen Victoria, that I first met the late Czar of all the Russias. I was going upstairs to Her Royal Highness' apartment, when at a very narrow point in the corridor I met a young gentleman. There was scarcely room for us to pass, and he had to squeeze himself up against the wall. Upon seeing me, he took his cigarette from his lips, lifted his hat, and passed on. When I got upstairs I told them how I had met Prince George, as the present King of England was then called.

"Oh dear no, dear Madame," I was told. "It was the Czarevitch, the future Emperor of Russia."

As every one knows, there is a striking resemblance between King George of England and the Czar of Russia, who are cousins. He impressed me as a very charming youth, very modest in demeanour, and very cordial. My first impression of him was that of a young, unostentatious college boy, who was up in London for the holidays; and yet, there was something of a grand air about him, a mysterious suggestion of his future destiny. I wonder if he still remembers, this Czar of all the Russias, those sweet pastoral days in England, so

void of care and sorrow. At any rate, the dressmaker has not forgotten his gracious bow. He cannot have forgotten those delightful days in London, although momentous times have supervened, distress and horror have pursued him. Does the youth subconsciously remember his own delightful personality of those early days in London, or has he really become a hard and unrelenting monarch? I wonder, for the impression I derived of him was truly a very adorable one.

I am doing my best to gather up the threads of all these brilliant memories of former years methodically, trying not to slip any incidents, no matter how small and unimportant they appeared at the time.

CHAPTER X

HIS MAJESTY'S LAST AFFAIR OF THE HEART

During those hours of morbid retrospection, in which kings and commoners equally indulge, His Majesty King Edward VII found solace in a new adherent to fill the void which the beautiful Countess of W. had left. This favourite of the court began her comet-like career with brilliant notoriety. She was not beautiful, she was tall, well formed, and, history says, was particularly proud of her limbs. She was somewhat younger than the Countess of W. People described her as a woman of fine stature, and attractive person. She had a great deal of spirit, she was daring, and whatever she undertook she carried out with considerable caution and perseverance.

In her relation with the king she was stubborn, sometimes presumptuous, faults that are almost inseparable from a sudden rise to fortune, from comparative poverty.

In her earlier career Mrs. G. K. was very poor

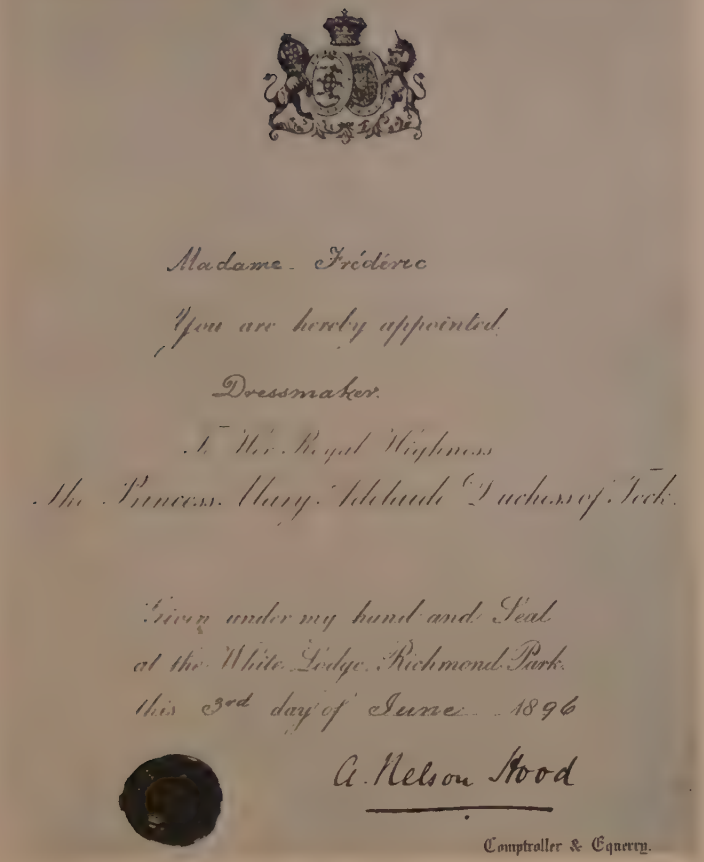
indeed. I knew her when her first baby was born, and she lived modestly in Wilton Crescent. No one would have dreamed then that she could ever reach her exalted station, if you like to call it such. I recall that she sent over to me one morning, with an order for some tea gowns. Naturally I was reluctant, knowing that she could hardly afford my prices. However, a certain lady M., who was then Miss Teresa V., told me that she would be responsible, and I sent a very pretty lace gown with pale blue ribbon. In later years, this court favourite could pay almost three figures for her gowns, when in former times one figure was too much. Being Scotch, she was naturally of a saving disposition, and therefore amassed a goodly fortune which she takes great care of. I heard that she was provided with twelve thousand pounds a year, but, of course, this is only rumour.

The royal favour mounted to her head like wine, tilted her balance for a downward trend. His Majesty showered all kinds of presents upon the new star. She was nearly always with him. There was a certain insolence in the way in which she endeavoured to usurp His Majesty. She dressed very well, her favourite colour being blue. She claimed to be an authority on certain theories of dress.

Those who looked on at this thriving romance, realised that the impatient spirit of the new favourite was little fitted to brook the devious endearments of the sovereign. There were lovesick quarrels and reconciliations in which the king indulged at times. These mimic comedies of forgiveness gave ample food for the cynics, and laughter for the superficial. When in Biarritz, the favourite often went to His Majesty's private sitting room. If for some reason or other His Majesty's confidential valet would not always allow her to enter, she made a scene, shed tears of exasperation.

There were times of mimic remorse, when she often declared that she would rather give everything up than continue to be talked about, than lead her life in the society of the king, which made her intoxicated with the audacity of power.

She was never entirely contented because there were always limitations to her ambitions, and she foresaw them. She was always demanding new proofs of his devotion to her. She feared always the loss of a certain prestige which her relations appeared to give her. She had a good brain, and would have interfered in affairs of state. In fact, she was constantly repeating to the king certain important facts which she pretended to have heard.



Madame Frédéric

You are hereby appointed

Dressmaker

to Her Royal Highness

the Princess Mary Adelaide Duchess of Teck.

Given under my hand and Seal

at the White Lodge Richmond Park

this 3rd day of June 1896

A. Nelson Hood

Comptroller & Equerry.

CERTIFICATE GRANTED BY PRINCESS MARY ADELAIDE, DUCHESS OF TECK

Her Royal Highness, the late Duchess of Teck, called by the Baroness "the most charming, genial, gracious and lovable of all royal ladies," mother of Queen Marie, appointed the author to receive the Royal Warrant; and introduced her as "the great artiste," into the Duchess' Salon, the night of an historical ball at Devonshire House, when the Duchess was gowned as the Electrice of Hanover in a creation of the author's.

She wanted always to be present at the most important moments of His Majesty's life, and perhaps he was conscious of a certain feline streak in her character, because he always banished her, ignored her, when matters of state were discussed. On these occasions she endured the refinement of humiliation.

She was a very calculating woman, and she no doubt had tremendous aspirations towards the throne. Of course, there is no bed of roses without thorns, and in her long talks with the king there were thorny moments.

I saw some of the presents she received by royal favour, and they were lovely gifts. She had a brooch set with a crown of diamonds, a necklace of magnificent round pearls. She always wore a diamond maltese cross and an eagle in diamonds and emeralds. One of her most precious royal trinkets, was a bracelet with the king's portrait set in diamonds. Her tailored gowns were always perfect, and on horseback her figure showed to great advantage.

Her house in Grosvenor Square displayed perfect taste, and her first reception there at the housewarming was a great success. I believe her eldest daughter was presented as a débutante to London society. Her husband, who was a brother of the

Earl of Albemarle, after a prolonged stay in America, went in for art decorations.

I remember travelling to England from Paris, seeing her at the station. There was a fearful crush, and everybody was trying to get to their seats. Suddenly this lady rushed by, pushing everybody aside, in great excitement to reach her carriage. Her arrogant demeanour was very much criticised. Following her, was a tall footman, carrying her dressing-case and jewel-box.

"Hurry, please, hurry," she said very loudly. "I must reach London this evening, my appointment with His Majesty allows of no delay."

The passengers smiled cynically at the audacity of her remark, at least at the bad taste.

It was a difficult position, and sometimes she turned to her own pleasures to escape the irritation of her master's petulant society. It was not astonishing that the nervous tension weighed upon her, and that she sometimes became fractious to a degree. His Majesty was approaching the maturity of years, and people often asked themselves what would become of her, when His Majesty died. They wondered if he would bequeath to her some power after his death.

Pro tem. she decided to provide against evil days

by saving her money. Naturally, among His Majesty's intimate friends she had not missed fire entirely, for she was very vain, and still resplendent. There arose complications sometimes which were distracting because of her domestic embarrassments, which she usually appeared to prefer. (She was a woman who was immured in the hour of diplomacy.) If she was disturbed, it was usually pretence, a post for a substantial pretext. She knew how vacillating the king was at times, and when his weaknesses appeared to jeopardise her power, she would wait until the affair had blown over. She learned to show no jealousy, and her interviews with His Majesty after an apparent lapse of devotion, artfully made her appear more august. It required all the skill of her clever brain to hide the diminution of her credit with the king from the public. Yet her devotion was unflinching, there was something in it that quelled even her changeable mood. She was so constantly with His Majesty that she was cynically referred to as the obstinate moth, who wished to burn her wings thoroughly, not merely singe them. Obviously they were very congenial, these two, for she was versatile in her mind, had a ready, spirituelle wit; and the hours they wiled away, sitting upon the rocks, close to the blue wa-

ters at Biarritz, must have been very delightful. She would assiduously tuck him up with rugs so that he would run no risk of catching cold, and relate to him the latest court scandal. Passersby could hear the gay laughter of His Majesty at the wit of some little piquant story told him.

But all things must come to an end. Had His Majesty lived longer, I think the idyl would have ended, for a new star was appearing even then upon the hemisphere of His Majesty's romance. She was the lovely American actress whom he was beginning to admire, and all sorts of rumours were beginning to be discussed about her at the clubs.

It was towards the end of King Edward's reign, that the function of being presented at court became singularly important. It had always been so, but somehow or other the Drawing Rooms at Buckingham Palace became the aim and ambition of every social aspirant who came to London. To be presented at the English court immediately opened a wide and wonderful social future, for it meant an entrée to any foreign court in the world.

The Drawing Rooms held in the early spring were the most beautiful because the weather was fine, the court dresses chosen were more brilliantly beautiful, the flowers were fresh, and every one was

jubilant and happy. On these occasions the whole of London and the suburbs emptied into the Mall to stare at the *grandes dames* and the young girls as they drove by in their gorgeous turnouts towards the palace. The coachmen and footmen always wore huge bouquets upon their liveries. There were flowers attached to the horses' heads, the silver and gold harnesses were sumptuous. Then there was a procession of the different ambassadors in their respective gorgeous uniforms, all of which made a big show for the crowds. It was customary for friends to approach the carriage windows when, as often happened, the procession of carriages was blocked. These little chats and flirtations at the open carriage windows relieved the patient waiting sometimes for hours, before the palace portals were opened to let the privileged enter. The splendid band of the Life Guards played popular music in the palace yards. All these gorgeously dressed women, once they emerged from their carriages, lost all reserve of manner, and became nothing but a swell mob, pushing and struggling with each other in the ante-rooms. There was a wooden barrier so arranged, held by the ushers, that could allow only so many ladies to pass in. The rooms and the staircases of the palace were filled with gorgeous flunk-

ies wearing the royal red liveries, a remnant of the Georges, who politely and ceremoniously conducted these ladies into the dressing-rooms, where maids took care of their wraps and gave them other assistance.

Their Majesties entered the throne room from a side staircase, preceded by Lord Dundonald, the Gold-Stick-in-Waiting, the Silver-Stick-in-Waiting, the Master of the Horse, the Duke of Portland, the Lord Marshal of Ceremonies, the late Duke of Norfolk. They walked backward, as gracefully as they could, in front of Their Majesties. Captain Godfrey's band played during the entire ceremony.

Queen Alexandra and King Edward VII took their places on the golden throne chairs which stood on a red dais. Standing around them, were all the important royalties, and the Diplomatic Corps. The wives and daughters of these gentlemen enjoyed the privilege of a private entrance to the palace, so that they should not mingle with the vulgar crowds.

In former years it was discovered that certain society chaperones in London could secure the privilege of a presentation at court for young girls, demanding a considerable sum for it. These chaperones were usually titled ladies but not rich, and be-

sides, in this way, adding to their income, the chaperones' expenses for a court gown, the carriage and the flowers were all thrown in. I knew several of these ladies who really made a good bit out of it. This situation was finally quashed, when one of these titled chaperones found her name erased from the list of court entertainments, and the presentation she had scheduled for an American lady was cancelled.

These functions were of great importance, and the preparation for them cost a little fortune for the outfit. I have made court gowns for from one hundred to five hundred guineas, and more. They always required costly embroidery, furs, laces. I used some of the most superb heirlooms of a ducal house in laces, which were over many hundred years old. If the lace was ripped from the gown, after the dress had been used, it was sent to Exeter, an old Cathedral town, to be restored. In Exeter lived a family of old lace-makers who had plied their trade for generations. They were experts, and they could reconstruct any lace, restoring it to its original pattern. I have had in my lace-safe over sixty thousand pounds' worth at one time.

The elder ladies, by special permission, were per-

mitted to wear lappets with their three feathers worn in the hair, but the younger women were compelled to have the regulation veil of tulle, trailing four yards long from the shoulders. One of the amusing incidents of my fitting rooms was when I had to see if these ladies in their new court gowns could courtesy and walk backwards in them without falling. The trains of the court gowns were very long, and it was the custom for the Lords-in-Waiting to throw these trains over the lady's left arm when she had finished her bow to royalty, to avoid confusion. I do not imagine that anywhere in the world one could find a more gorgeous spectacle than these English court Drawing Rooms.

CHAPTER XI

SOME BEAUTIES OF KING EDWARD'S REIGN

What wonderful, stately beauties those women of King Edward's court were! Such women as Georgina, the Countess of Dudley, the late Countess of Dalhousie, the late Duchess of Leinster, Lady Lonsdale, Marchioness of Ripon, the Countess of Londesborough, and many others.

The close relations between the German House of Hanover and the English ruling blood is well known. I recall that Her Royal Highness, the Princess Fredericka of Hanover, who became Baroness von Pavel-Rammingen, came to me and ordered her coronation gown. She was a superb woman, with a perfect figure, and glorious white hair. She was pronounced the most regal-looking woman at the coronation ceremonies of King Edward VII. Her presence at that time was regarded with a great deal of pride by the British, for her imperial carriage made her tower over all the other royal ladies present. She was the daughter of the

blind King of Hanover, and inherited much of her beauty from her mother, who was the beautiful Princess of Altenburg. Her royal parents were at that time among the richest reigning sovereigns. Her brother was the Duke of Cumberland, a royal Prince of the House of England, who married Princess Thyra of Denmark, sister of Queen Alexandra. Before the great cataclysm of war happened in Europe, the Duke of Cumberland was recognised as the head of the House of Guelph. The marriage of Princess Fredericka of Hanover was a romantic affair, and a love match. I believe, however, it was not very much approved by her family. She was a great friend of my late husband, who, like herself, had been brought up at the blind King of Hanover's Court.

The opportunity which King Edward's leniency of taste in fashion gave the dressmakers of his reign, inspired me to create some odd effects. For instance, I accomplished a startling gown novelty which was worn by Queen Alexandra at the Ascot races. It was a costume made of Turkish towelling. I also created for Her Majesty some brown Holland gowns profusely trimmed with velvet. Women of fashion were surprised at the audacity of these combinations, and some women were surprised at

the prices of these gowns. I recall that Mrs. H. Oppenheim, the wife of a rich English banker, who frequently entertained King Edward when he was Prince of Wales, objected to the price of a cotton frock, profusely intermixed with linen embroidery. The price of the frock was sixty-five guineas, and it staggered her.

"But, my dear," she said to me, "this is only a cotton frock after all."

"Yes, Madame, but it is a Frédéric frock," I said.

These moods of economy, however, among the beautiful women of this period were very rare. Many of them were quite grateful for my assistance.

I recall an occasion when a very beautiful girl, daughter of a descendant of Elizabeth Fry, went to the races in one of my frocks, and there met her husband, who declared it was love at first sight. He was then Lord Elcho, now the Earl of Weymis. She always declared it was my frock that did it. I can see her now, a dark, slender beauty, wearing that gown of terra cotta cloth, with *revers* of reseda velvet. Hat *en suite,* of course. Her sister was Pamela Wyndham, daughter of the Honourable Percy Wyndham, and niece of *Lord Leconfield.* In after years, with her two lovely sisters, Mrs.

Adeane and Lady Tennant, the three who have been mentioned in an earlier chapter as "The Three Graces" were immortalised in a painting by the famous American artist, Sargent. I clothed these three girls before they were married,—it seems only yesterday—yet I am now confronted with the presence of their marriageable daughters. They are not quite so beautiful as their mothers were. Nature does not reproduce as accurately as one could wish, but perhaps that is because I helped to make their mothers look lovely, a bit of conceit upon my part, yet one that is, I feel, nevertheless true. However, truth is perhaps not always appreciated, but I feel that Mr. Balfour did, for he has not changed his lifelong devotion to the Honourable Mrs. Percy Wyndham, the lovely mother of "The Three Graces."

It was my custom to study my gowns and my clients as a painter studies the composition of his picture, as Gainsborough did, or Hoppner did. There was once an idea, a horrible tradition, that a brunette should always wear brilliant orange, crimson, or bright green. Carlos Duran reversed all this by advocating these colours for blondes, hence his marvellous pictures, when for instance in later years, he painted the portrait of the late Countess

Dalhousie, one of the most beautiful women of her time, and the lovely Duchess of Leinster. The sudden death of the Earl of Dalhousie, who was taken ill on board his yacht, was the beginning of the end of this beautiful woman. In some mysterious way, for some tragic reason unexplained, the beautiful woman, the Countess Dalhousie, died only one week later.

I remember her very well, with her Madonna face. She was a tall, graceful woman, and as in the celebrated painting by Carlos Duran, I remember seeing her in her gown of dead rose-leaf shade, of which she was very fond. She was a superb personality.

The Duchess of Leinster, and the blond duke, her husband, did not see their sons grow to manhood. The Duchess of Leinster was really the prototype of a Grecian goddess. She was the daughter of another celebrated beauty, the Countess of Faversham, who created a sensation wherever she went. Also, the man with the scythe is no respecter of persons.

This day of tall, long limbed English beauties, which Du Maurier immortalised in his sketches for *Punch,* was indeed rich and inspiring for the dressmaker. No one who ever saw the beautiful Count-

ess of Dudley, whose marriage to the eccentric Lord Dudley was one of the extravagances of London life, where so many poor but deserving beauties have sacrificed themselves upon the altar of Mammon, can ever forget her. She was one of the proud Montcrieffs, one of three sisters who were all equally beautiful, tall, regal. There was a very great difference between the ages of the enormously wealthy Lord Dudley and the very beautiful Countess of Dudley. She reigned supreme over Dudley House on Park Lane, in London, where she frequently had the honour of entertaining the King and Queen, and all the brilliant society of the Court.

Georgina, Countess of Dudley, will go down to history as one of those famous women whom King Edward VII admired. She was very tall, patrician in feature and manner, and wore the most sumptuous and glorious clothes. Her beauty of course was of the statuesque type, with magnificent hair, and the carriage of an empress. She was one of the most elegant and most extravagant women of her time. Her *lingerie* and all her personal accessories were proverbially envied. Her house was full of the finest collection of portraits and *objets d'art,* and every one was only too anxious to be invited to her receptions. When the famous sapphires which

every one in London had seen or heard about were stolen from her, she never by word or action betrayed the effect of this great loss. Her pride was unparalleled, and her *soirées* and balls were like royal occasions. Among her greatest admirers was Cecil Rhodes, the famous South African king, and it was no secret in London that the Kaiser delighted in her presence. As the years went by they seemed to pass the Countess of Dudley unimpressively. She never seemed to change, or fade, or radiate any the less, as she grew older. The two sisters of the Countess of Dudley, Lady Mordaunt and the Duchess of Athole, were equally handsome women. With their sister, the Countess of Dudley, they were always referred to in London, before their marriage, as "the perfect trio." The late Lady Mordaunt was for a long time an invalid. The Duchess of Athole, like her sister, the Countess of Dudley, enjoys all the privileges of being a society favourite in London.

The list of regal women who were the court favourites of King Edward VII and Queen Alexandra is far too long to complete in so brief a chronicle of the times as this one. A few of them, however, established a personal influence in my life, and therefore are more vividly remembered.

The beautiful Lady Lonsdale, for instance, who is now the Marchioness of Ripon, was one of the intimate friends of the Queen. Naturally, the act of gowning these aristocratic women was an occupation which inspired romantic possibilities. If the fame of an English beauty could be improved by a stunning frock, then the romantic career of that beauty had been somewhat inspired by Frédéric. Lady Lonsdale had an instinct for exquisite gowning, but I may take the credit of stirring the romantic instincts of the late Duke of Albany, with a tea gown I made for Her Ladyship. He was a bachelor, and admired her from the moment he saw her in this creation. It was a tea gown of *moire crêpe de chine,* with an overdress of finest Bruges lace, transparent, with touches of turquoise blue. It was a very becoming combination to the marvellous beauty of Lady Lonsdale. The Duke of Albany was a bachelor, and this tea gown "bowled him over."

Lady Lonsdale at this time lived in a charming little house in Brook Street, London. It was excellently and daintily arranged. Her boudoir and bedroom were lined with real lace over turquoise blue. Her toilet set was also turquoise and gold. Low cushion-like settees which furnished the room

were also in pale blue brocades. The rest of the furniture was of white ivory, and in huge vases bunches of white syringa and violets filled the rooms with perfume.

To-day she is the Marchioness of Ripon, and though her hair is snow-white, she is as greatly admired as in former years.

One would rather expect to find a predominance of Saxon types among the beautiful women of this period, but as a matter of fact they were rare.

The striking blonde beauty of the Countess of Londesborough established her reputation among these wonderful women of King Edward's court. The Countess of Londesborough had a most unique way of dressing. She would drape a piece of real lace and some oriental material around her lovely shoulders, put on one of those picture hats which only our English women know how to wear (for confirmation see Gainsborough's pictures), and she would become the cynosure of all eyes. To-day, her daughter, Lady Dennison, who is engaged to a prince royal, is one of the most active and loyal women workers for the wounded, in fact for the entire cause, in London.

I do not believe there is any European Court in the twentieth century which could boast of such a

complex magnitude of loveliness among women as the Court of King Edward VII properly claimed. Their types of beauty were unrivalled,—their complexions, their glorious hair, their figures,—all inspired the artist's vision of the dressmaker.

The wealth of laces that passed through my hands during this period would beggar description. Frequently I was anxious for the intrinsic value of the laces and jewels that were entrusted to my care during the making of gowns. I particularly remember a study in black and white which I made for the Princess Alexis Dologorouki. I had to have special watchmen in my studios, to carefully guard the diamonds and laces used in the creation of this gown. Their value represented a colossal sum.

CHAPTER XII

PERSONAL ANECDOTES OF QUEEN MARY

Those first days of my career as court dressmaker in London were always sustained by a firm knowledge that I understood the point of view of those aristocratic women whose aristocracy was based on the high ideals of character. It has not fallen to the lot of many dressmakers to have been able to have gowned so many queens and other royal women as I have had the honour to do. My portfolio is filled with the most charming appreciative epistles from them. The letters are too numerous to enumerate. I have selected only a few for reproduction here. Obviously, they are one and all equally precious to me, though I have a feeling that the regard which Her Majesty Queen Mary has so often graciously expressed, is perhaps a little closer to my heart.

I have known Her Majesty since she was quite a young girl. In her mode of dressing her taste was always conservative, never extreme, never loud

or conspicuous. Her favourite colours were always pale rose and pale blues. Sometimes, in later years, white or black predominated.

I had the honour of making her bridesmaids' dresses. The mere mention of their names seems to conjure up strange influences that should have maintained an everlasting peace in Europe. They were such sweet princesses, such sensible girls, these embryonic Queens of Europe.

I can see them as they were at this royal wedding of Queen Mary to King George, looking forward to their own careers with the usual reserve and excitement of any bridesmaids.

They were the young Princesses Victoria and Maud of England, the Danish Princesses, Thyra and Ertrude; then there was the daughter of Her Royal Highness, the Duchess of Albany, now the Princess of Battenberg, and the little Princess Ena, now the Queen of Spain. They were a most irresistible bouquet of rosebuds, simple, very chaste-looking in their white *peau de soie,* carrying bunches of deep crimson geraniums, which suited them to perfection. Each Princess, daintily and with measured steps, walked behind the then Duchess of York, the bride, the present Queen Mary of England. Princess Victoria was very stately; she car-

ried herself with perfect poise. She was of the *spirituelle* type, and by disposition very amiable. The Princess Maud, now the Queen of Norway, was very *petite,* piquant, full of the joy of living, as she tripped along in this wonderful procession with the little Danish Princesses. These latter, perhaps not having imbibed the full freedom of an English Court, were a trifle timid and overwhelmed with the splendour of the event, yet they were charming girls. The younger Princesses, mere children then, were Princess Ena, now Queen of Spain, and the little daughter of Her Royal Highness, the Duchess of Albany. I remember that they strongly objected to wearing *décolleté* gowns at all, and I had to use great discretion and tact with them. In the intervening years these charming girls of royal blood have scattered over Europe. I wonder if in the midst of the present turmoil they remember those lovely times, if they feel at all sad. How they must realise in these remembrances that the world, even for royal princesses and queens, is not all *coleur de rose!*

It has been my privilege to know Her Majesty Queen Mary since she was a child, and in all those years, her graciousness, her unbounded cordiality, her kindness, will be like a beacon light showing

me back to the land of my adoption. I had the honour of making Her Majesty's coronation gown of white *satin duchesse* embroidered in gold *cilisée,* in return for which she paid me the compliment of sending me her autographed portrait, that I might never forget how beautiful she looked. When I went for the last glimpse of this beautiful gown, Her Majesty put on her crown of diamonds, so that I could see her in all her glory. It was a unique experience, but then I had many extraordinary favours shown me by these exclusive, royal women, that I shall always regard as tokens of personal character. It was my good fortune when Her Majesty went to India to make nearly all her *toilettes,* and I had great difficulty in some measure, as I could not use any tarnishable trimmings or fabrics that would not stand the climatic influences.

Her Majesty usually received me courteously, graciously, and more or less formally. She has always been overpoweringly kind, and should these lines find their way to her, Queen Mary of England will see that notwithstanding that I am an exile in a strange land, I am a loyal and devoted subject of Great Britain.

My memories of Queen Mary run into such ador-

able and delightful channels, that I hardly know where to begin with incident and anecdote that will confirm my adoration of her.

I remember one day when my business with her at the palace was finished and I had nearly reached the ante-chamber, the footman called me back.

"Her Majesty would very much like to see you."

I thought, naturally, it was upon the business upon which I had come to see her. When I returned, I found in her room an enormous basket of lilies-of-the-valley which had just been sent to the Queen from the country.

"Please take as many as you like, my dear, for your invalid husband," said Her Majesty.

One Saturday afternoon, after business hours, my private telephone was ringing. My secretary having left, I spoke on the telephone myself.

"Who is it?"

"Could Madame Frédéric come over to Buckingham Palace at once, to see the Queen on a private matter?"

"Of course, I shall be with Her Majesty as soon as possible," I said.

When I arrived at the palace, Lady Bertha Dawkins, one of the sweetest, most loyal, and most lovable women one could imagine, told me that Her

Majesty would like to consult me upon a rather difficult matter. The ladies of Ireland had proposed to send Her Majesty some of their beautiful home-made Irish crochet and lace offerings. Her Majesty graciously asked would I help her to choose these laces. Being known more or less as an expert, Her Majesty assumed that I might suggest something new.

"Would Her Majesty like a lace train, made up to hang as a Dalmatian mantle, from the shoulders?" I asked.

"Excellent idea, my dear, you have it cut out and we will send it to Ireland," said Her Majesty.

It took nearly six months to complete it, but it was beautifully executed, and I had the honour of making it up over the most delicate rose coloured *chiffon royale,* and Her Majesty wore it on a very important occasion. To many people royalty seems so far removed from normal conditions, that when they do behave quite normally, as any other person, the majority can scarcely believe that it is true. In this country, such a condition was thought to be impossible, but you still have traditions in the making. In Europe, if a Queen graciously invites her subject not to stand, shakes her cordially by the hand, and asks many every-day

questions, notwithstanding one may come as a "person in trade," it is very unusual. That such an event occurred to me, is therefore perhaps interesting to recall.

Her Majesty Queen Mary,—perhaps through force of habit,—having seen me continually since she was a child, on one occasion gave me a delightful surprise of this character. It was when she was Princess of Wales and was living at York House. I had been on my feet fitting Her Royal Highness with twenty-two gowns, and I was tired and hungry. That didn't matter, but possessing the traits of a charming manner, the Princess suddenly dropped all royal etiquette, and invited me to share an improvised lunch with her. I was at first very much embarrassed. A footman brought in upon a tray of silver, served in exquisite silver cups, some jellied chicken. I can even now inhale the aroma of that delicious food, of the cold dainties, and the little accessories, which made a most enjoyable meal. Her Majesty, then Princess of Wales, was inclined to be very jocular in conversation, sometimes a little cynical, yet very witty. She made me laugh at her observations in general upon subjects which did not apply to the dressmaker's art at all. To repeat the conversation would be unbecoming of the

privilege I enjoyed, but it left the impression not usually understood of the present Queen of England, of a very witty, worldly, democratic woman.

While my memory dwells upon the personality of this delightful Queen, I recall a meeting at the Zoological Gardens in London, where I went with my late husband and my grandnieces, like everybody else, to see the elephants. We had no sooner entered than we saw Her Royal Highness, the Princess of Wales, accompanied by Lady Eva Dugdale, also deeply interested in the elephants.

I bowed ceremoniously, and Her Royal Highness graciously turned to me.

"Present me to your husband," she said. He stood at attention, saluted, and conversed with her.

"Who are these dear little girls?" asked the Princess.

"My grandnieces," I replied.

Her Royal Highness shook hands with these children, and, of course, they never forgot it, nor does any one else ever forget the honour of shaking hands with a Queen.

Her Majesty Queen Mary was always very tender-hearted and punctiliously considerate of others.

"My dear, why are you in mourning?" she asked me once.

"My sister just lost her eldest boy, nineteen years of age, at college," I said.

"How very sad! Pray convey to your sister how I feel for her, and how very sorry I am for her. Please do not forget," said Her Majesty.

In times of real sorrow, or grief, or trouble to others, Queen Mary has always been kindness itself. Her exalted rank was an unforeseen destiny. As a girl, Her Majesty was brought up with great care and economy, and her young days were not those of unalloyed happiness and wealth. The household of the Queen's late parents was not at all extravagant, in fact it was very simple. Her Governess, the late Madame Brica, was of Polish extraction, and she gave Princess Mary of Teck a very sound education. The Queen speaks French and German brilliantly. Most of her lessons were supervised by her father, the late Duke of Teck. The late Madame Brica was an intimate friend of the psychic, the late Mrs. Morgan Richards, the mother of the brilliant Mrs. Pearl Craigie, the novelist who wrote under the *nom de plume* of Oliver Hobbs. It was through Mrs. Richards that I became known to the late Duchess of Teck. In her own picturesque way, it was Mrs. Morgan Richards who predicted that Princess Mary of Teck would

become Queen of England. The incident at which this prediction was made, in the home of the Duke of Teck, savoured of the occult, but Mrs. Morgan Richards was, I believe, a spiritualist.

It was just after the late Duke of Clarence, to whom Princess Mary was betrothed, had passed away at such an early age, when the chances that she would become Queen of England were very remote. In the presence of the Princess Mary and her family, the late Mrs. Morgan Richards depicted in her flowery way the future of the Queen.

"I see," said Mrs. Richards, "the clouds are rolling away. I see a huge crown which comes nearer and nearer, behold it falls into the lap of the young Princess Mary. I predict that she will become Queen of England."

When Prince George proposed and was accepted, Mrs. Morgan Richards' prediction came true.

When the Princess Royal, Louise Victoria, became the Duchess of Fife, her *trousseau* was most generously and lavishly submitted by all the tradespeople. Her mother, Queen Alexandra, at that time Princess of Wales, allotted a room for each firm to display their latest and newest modes. I remember so well, wandering with Her Royal

Highness, Princess of Wales, through all these rooms, where we saw the most beautiful fabrics of all tints of the rainbow. It was my privilege to make for the Princess Royal some pale blue mauve shell and white gowns. An Indian shawl which "Grandma" (Queen Victoria) had given, I converted into a charming *mantelet*. Its success was great, for the shawl by itself, notwithstanding its value, which ran into four figures, would never have appealed to a young girl had I not fashioned it into something graceful. After that, Indian shawls came to me galore, and so late as just before the outbreak of the present war I made of one a very lovely *sorti de bal* for Her Majesty Queen Mary. Relieved with cerise velvet, and fringed in all the Indian colours, it proved quite a success.

Her Majesty Queen Victoria's preference for Indian shawls as wedding presents, was one of the standing humours of England during the last years of her reign.

CHAPTER XIII

SOME BEAUTIFUL AMERICAN WOMEN IN ENGLAND

As I approach the end of these scattered reminiscences, I find myself on the peaks of modernity, from which I have really been surveying the years gone by. It is only a little while ago, it seems, that I had the pleasure of meeting so many American women who came to England and married English titles. The American woman was an entirely new type to the English dressmaker. There was more of the French quality about her than one found in the purely Saxon beauties of England. As to the success of these marriages, the world has heard more or less remarkable circumstances. I have no special knowledge upon which to base an opinion as to the happiness of these international romances. It has been said that some of them contain the romantic spice, or the sociological theme, so to say, of that famous and extraordinary story, "Three Weeks."

The mention of this novel recalls an incident, when one very rainy night my butler announced the Honourable Mrs. Glyn, a Belgian lady, who was the wife of Bishop Glyn. We often used to chat in French, as our nieces were educated in the same private school in Westgate-on-Sea.

There stood the Honourable Mrs. Glyn, and by her side, a slip of a girl, tall, graceful, more than usually oblivious of her peculiar type of beauty, smiling languidly, and bowing a little ceremoniously. The conversation naturally began in the stereotyped way about the weather, and as it was pouring torrents she deplored the fact of the absence of an umbrella which she imagined she must have left at home. I often wonder how true the saying is that coming events cast their shadows before, for this young genius standing there so quietly, so unassuming in her manner, really had then the power to make people look at her intensely. She created at once an atmosphere of curiosity and wonder.

She was no ordinary slip of a girl. The fire of genius was alight already in her wonderful green-grey eyes, and apparently bored and apathetic, she took in every nook and corner of the room. Being

attracted by some gowns which were just being delivered, she said:

"Some day, when my ship comes in, I shall certainly come to see you."

She was, to say the least, poorly clad.

"This is my daughter-in-law," said the Honourable Mrs. Glyn, "my boy has just married her," and then in French she said, "without the consent of his parents."

Really, I couldn't blame him, for the girl was a beautiful creature. There was a weirdness about her beauty that was mischievous, and yet she made a Madonna-like appeal. I gazed at her, wondering what the future of this strange girl might be.

This was Elinor Glyn, who wrote "Three Weeks" and became famous. When I heard of it I was not astonished, for I still remembered how the hidden fires of her genius smouldered in her wonderful eyes, as she stood before me that night in her very shabby little gown, and her carefully mended gloves.

I wonder if the famous writer remembers this little unimportant incident. I wonder if her good-looking mother-in-law still lives, for I have not seen her for many years.

In this connection, I am reminded with equal in-

terest, when Mrs. Harcourt Williams, a journalist of prominence in London, urged me to meet a little woman whom she had discovered,—a Mrs. Wallace.

"She is so pretty, and makes the most adorable blouses," said Mrs. Williams, "I think she is quite a genius."

I never met her, but evidently she did have genius, for in later years, she became the famous dressmaker "Lucile,"—Lady Duff-Gordon.

Among the beautiful American women whom I knew was Consuelo, Duchess of Manchester. She was the lovely Miss Ysnaga of Baltimore, who inherited her millions from her late brother.

The Duchess of Manchester was unconventional in the sense that she was so democratic. She was no stickler for etiquette. I remember one Sunday, when we were boating on the river Thames, and had just paddled into a little side stream and had our lunch, there drifted in beside us, another small boat. They had lost their rudder, and my husband and I offered to pull them back into the broad water. Lady Mandeville, who was in the party, promptly turned around and asked me if they could share our little picnic lunch, as they were so very hungry. How we enjoyed this little incident, exciting for them, particularly interesting to us. Consuelo was

not so very rich then, and her aristocratic mother-in-law inspired her with awe. She was very pretty, and her marriage with the Duke, or rather Lord "Manderville" as he was called by his cronies, for he was very fond of champagne, was an event. He died comparatively young, in the midst of his wild oats. His son married Miss Zimmerman of Cincinnati, but I believe he did not follow in the footsteps of his father. Consuelo of Manchester was particularly fond of purple and black. Her skin was of a dazzling whiteness. She was quite tall, very graceful, but it seemed to me she was afflicted with perpetual motion. I believe it was a nervous affliction. She was a very great favourite of the Princess of Wales, later Queen Alexandra, and her untimely death, and the extraordinary decease of her two beautiful daughters, the Ladies Montague, who were twins, and who both died in their teens, was a great shock to the Dowager Queen Alexandra.

Mrs. Pierre Lorillard, née Taylor, was another handsome American woman whom I knew. She was tall, slender, with masses of nut-brown hair. She was extremely dignified, very proud, rarely smiled, and always immaculate in her *toilettes*. For

my personal taste, she was too stiff. Her daughters, I believe, do not resemble her in the least.

Mrs. Ronalds Lorillard, *petite* and fair, whom I gowned while she was in London, was a very graceful and charming person, who affected a style in dress that was quite her own. Her little mother always insisted upon wearing a gown of grey and white, in simple Quaker style. I believe she was the second wife. Her husband often came with her from America, and we had long talks, compared notes on international questions. The recollection of my acquaintance with all these delightful American men and women adds to the comfort of my transplanted life on your hospitable shores.

"La Petite" Livingston, as Miss Livingston was called in London, was another American girl who appeared in London society. She was a perfect little Dresden china figure. Being an only daughter, and being brought up by a more than devoted father and uncle, I remember how anxious these gentlemen were that I should bestow upon her dear little person every possible attention, to give her the best and the most expensive to be had. Money was no object. I designed her wedding gown, which was of oyster white crystalline, in princess style, with an overdress of Buckinghamshire lace.

The veil was in tulle, falling over the whole gown, trimmed with myrtle and white lilacs. Her going-away dress (it was late autumn) was a sapphire blue velvet, the coat of which was trimmed with Peruvian chinchilla, with toque and muff to match. Her *trousseau* was a revelation, and she was so charmed that she sent me a beautiful brooch in the shape of a heart made of diamonds with a sapphire centre. It was a very sweet souvenir, and though many years have gone by, I cherish the memento.

Those American girls of former times were intensely interesting because they were so clever. They absorbed everything so quickly, and they drifted so rapidly into the burning question of dress.

In former years the fashionable rendezvous for many leaders in society was Paris. It was there that Mrs. Bayard Cutting and Mrs. Townsend Burden created a sensation among American women in their gowns made by Worth. Mrs. Townsend Burden, I believe, was a sister of the late Pierpont Morgan. These ladies adopted a very severe style, but were regarded as examples of *grandes dames.*

Mrs. Van Rensselaer was also a key to good taste, she was always tone-giving, and was one of this

coterie in Paris who standardised American beauty in Europe.

The extravagance of the American woman abroad often led to tragic consequences. I remember a very celebrated and very famous American, who was the wife of an author. All Paris raved about her beauty, her style, her luxurious mode of life. Her carriages, her horses, her town house and her country house, were all very elegant. She was exclusively gowned by Worth, whose creations for her cost fabulous prices. She never seemed to count the cost. Then she fell in love with another man, her husband remonstrated, but—men are knaves and women are fools, and the old story seems forever new. The husband divorced her, and shortly afterwards died. Later, I saw this woman who almost wielded the sceptre of a queen, creeping along the Boulevards of Paris, when the lights were dim, a sorrowful object. She was soliciting alms of passers-by. She was truly a tragic spectacle, and yet she was once a queen among American women in Paris.

The Princess Hatzfeld, formerly Miss Huntington of California and now a widow, was one of the wealthy American women who made England her home,—her country. Her place was indeed a great

rendezvous for what we call on the other side, the "sporting set." Her husband kept a well-stocked stable of thoroughbreds, and the Princess was a very good horsewoman. She dressed well, and looked very chic in her riding habit. In her earlier days the Prince used to assist her in choosing her gowns. I remember so well during a visit she made to my *salons,* how the prince himself chose for her a beautiful *toilette* of grey ardoise *satin jupe, demi-train.* The *corsage* was in pale rose velvet, with a broad black *moire* sash, edged with narrow black *moire* ribbons, and a *jabot* of real lace.

Mrs. Hugh Hallket was one of the most beautiful creatures in her early youth, and even now, though she never gets up until sundown, she appears almost as wonderful as Rider Haggard's "She." Before the war, the so-called *Jeunesse d'orée* used to rally round her in her home at the little Normandy watering-place, Dînard. She is famous for her dancing of those alluring Tzigane waltzes. She is really a modern Niñon de L'Enclos. Her mother remained young up to eighty, and the daughter decidedly follows in her footsteps. She is a brunette with wonderful blue eyes, a most graceful figure, which she still retains; she is wonderfully preserved, defying age and time with a

youthful spirit. Not at all grotesque, but very *spirituelle.* She is brilliantly educated, really a great musician, a painter and a sculptor. Her talents are really phenomenal. She is unique, because although she has over-stepped the boundary line of three-score years and ten, she still holds a charm for youth that seems to pursue her everywhere. Her gowns, discreet, esthetic, are all her own inspiration, and I felt very much flattered when she wrote to me at London to send her one of my own ideas for a rest gown. It was in the palest shade of lilac *crêpe de chine,* looped with huge *cordelières* in deeper tones, flowing sleeves, no *décolletage* to speak of, which left everything to the imagination.

"Princess Nellie," as Nellie Grant's friends used to call her, was one of the most beautiful American girls imaginable. When she travelled with her father, the late President Grant, on his official trip through Europe, she was magnificently received at all the Courts. In England, she enjoyed the prestige permitted to royalty only, and I have often wondered how it was that she was satisfied to disappear from all this European grandeur. I believe it was a love match. Mr. Sartoris, her husband, I never met, but I could not understand how such a plain Lochinvar should win one of the most ador-

able girls I have ever seen. Her brother, the American ambassador to Austria, was a very nice fellow. I waltzed with him when he was a young man studying in New York. Her daughters gave grand parties, and they resembled their beautiful mother very much. One rarely sees such colouring as theirs. They were neither too tall nor too small, just the happy medium. They inherited the smile with which their mother captivated and fascinated the world at large. Like the modest violet, she preferred no doubt to shine in a little garden of her own, where the perfume of youth and the sweetness of her disposition could remain unspoiled and untarnished. My task in gowning her was therefore a very easy and satisfactory one. I presume, if she ever should read these lines, she will remember at one time being detained for hours at my *salon* in London, because she had missed a train and had to wait. How patient she was, and with what interest she listened to the many amusing conversations which are carried on in a dressmaking establishment.

"I enjoyed this intermezzo immensely," she said as she was leaving, "what a wonderful existence. I almost envy you, such a perpetual kaleidoscope of interesting people."

Indeed she was right, the dressmaker's *salon* is where you see woman in all her weaknesses, her shortcomings, and her ambitions.

Most of you will remember Edna May, and her triumph in "The Belle of New York." She became the ideal of all London before she married Mr. Oscar Lewisohn. Strawberry leaves and ducal crowns were laid at her feet, fortunes were offered to her, with a persistency that we shall never know. Yet this pretty little woman chose wisely and well.

Her husband is still very much in love with her, she has changed very little, if at all, her sweet child-like smile hovers round her pretty mouth still. She prefers the old-fashioned taste, even to-day. The huge capes which our grandmothers admired become her; the voluminous furs in which she envelops herself still hide her, and she still peeps out of them like a huge doll. I know she adores England, and her house in London, but her husband prefers it to New York.

Mrs. Beach Grant was another of those beautiful American women. Her daughter, the present Countess of Essex, when she first came to London, had destiny willed it, could have been Lady Curzon, but I believe circumstances made her change her mind. She is a very great favourite in London so-

ciety, and is always well turned out. Her sister was the most brilliant beauty, married very young, and lost her husband very soon. I believe she belonged to the French nobility.

Mrs. Beach Grant told me once that in her youth she was never allowed any but milk foods, as she was suffering from heart disease. She is still hale and hearty, however. Her cousin, Mrs. Scott, who had a most tragic end in London, was a very exquisite and extravagant dresser. Every time she came to London, she ordered *toilettes* galore. She was, or her husband was, very wealthy. She was of a type of beauty that made her look almost like a Créole. She had wonderful hands and feet, and dressed to perfection. I remember making a ball dress for her of rose pink tulle with cerise bows of velvet and a bunch of crimson dahlias, as a *bouquet de corsage.* While waiting for her carriage to go to the ball, she took a book from the table to read. She had been suffering with a headache and it is supposed she had taken a dose of bromide, probably an overdose. When her maid came to tell her that her carriage was waiting, they found her, book in hand, dressed in this charming gown,—dead. The next morning I received a wire to discontinue her orders for other gowns. So, this charming woman, young,

beautiful, rich, admired, passed into eternity smiling, and garbed for a ball.

Mrs. Sam Newhouse, a great friend and protégé of the late Mrs. Ronalds, managed to climb the social ladder, with a great éclat. Mrs. Newhouse was very pretty, with a charming figure. I had the pleasure of gowning her for years. She was certainly quite an acquisition, for she wore her clothes perfectly, she walked well, and her marvellous jewels gave her great notoriety. I was told that the insurance upon her pearls was the highest ever paid in New York. Her great friends are Mrs. Bradley Martin and Lady Craven, whom she helped in the good cause, and also although she has a town house, she prefers to live in the country where she gives her little dinners and receptions.

Alas, alas, these absorbing topics of gowns are no longer *de rigueur* in Europe. We do not speak, we do not think, we do not produce them. To be flippant, to be interested in pomp and vanity when the death knell continually booms its last salute to some dear one, is impossible.

Still, we women must be gowned, even at the risk of being called vain.

Vanity, thy name is woman.

CHAPTER XIV

HER MAJESTY THE QUEEN OF ROUMANIA

WHENEVER I am asked who, among the queens of Europe it has been my privilege to know, is the most beautiful, I can say without hesitation, it is Her Majesty the Queen of Roumania, the greatest reigning beauty in Europe. In her presence is combined the royal splendour of two great royal families. She is the daughter of the Duke of Edinburgh, the granddaughter of Queen Victoria, on her father's side. On her mother's side, who was the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia, she is the granddaughter of the late Emperor Alexander of Russia, who was assassinated. Consider for a minute what a heritage of personal dignity and beauty this Queen of Roumania enjoys. She has inherited her superb loveliness from her ancestors, in an unprecedented measure; she has blended the barbaric grandeur of Russia with the aristocratic breeding of the House of Hanover and England. When a girl of sixteen she married one of the Hohenzol-

lerns, who was practically adopted by the late King, and the late Carmen Sylva, Queen of Roumania. I had the privilege of knowing them both intimately.

The present Queen of Roumania is by all means the most beautiful of all Queens in Europe. The most wonderful part of her regal personality is her real charm, which consists in the fact that she is absolutely ignorant of, or indifferent to, her own beauty and her peculiar magnetic gifts. Her head is set upon her shoulders in such perfect poise and proportion, that it has been compared to the sculpture proportions of a living Juno. It is crowned with masses of the most luxurious chestnut-coloured hair, which she wears in a luxurious coil. The effect is classical in the extreme, and her calm, clear-cut features, add to an impression she gives of a perfect cameo. She prefers the costume of a Roumanian peasant. Its simplicity, its brilliant colours, add charm that enhances her mobile features. She has the most wonderful smile of any woman I ever saw. In modern dress, the Queen of Roumania prefers always the long lines. Her gowns are usually made of heavy draperies, caught up with precious stones. I recall I had the honour of producing for her a gown of gold tissue over an

underdress of *moire souple ivorie* entirely covered with *turquoise velvet miroir,* caught with huge tassels hanging from the shoulders. Her wonderful hair was intertwined with huge Caucasian turquoise and diamonds. It was *coronet à la Russe.*

Her stockings, I always made for her, were especially woven, in all possible shades imaginable.

The first time I met Her Majesty was when she sent for me on a special occasion. When I entered her room, her husband was standing not very far from the lounge where she was sitting. They both exclaimed on my entrance, for my resemblance to the late Queen of Roumania, Carmen Sylva. I felt highly complimented. Her husband, now the King, who was then Crown Prince of Roumania, was a great admirer of women. I noticed that he was looking very hard at the little English girl I had brought with me as an assistant. In fact, he was so absorbed in admiration that he did not see a step-ladder which had been left in the room for the hanging of some curtains. Naturally, he fell over the ladder. We all laughed, none more heartily than Her Majesty, because we all knew why he had failed to see the step-ladder, we all knew that his eyes were rivetted upon the pretty little English milliner.

SERVICIUL MAESTRULUI CURȚEI

A. S. R. PRINCIPELUI ROMANIEI

Alteta Sa Regală Principele României

dorind a da o dovadă de Înalta Sa bună voință

Firmei Madame Frédéric

Cicitorie pentru Doamne London Lower Grosvenor Place, Eaton Square

[illegible]

Furnisor al Curtei Princiare

Firmei Madame Frédéric [illegible] avea

dreptul de a purta acest titlu în conformitate cu prescripțiunile

Regulamentului în [illegible]

Maestrul Curtei Princiare

General Al. C. Robescu

Palatul Cotroceni Aprilie 1, 1908

N.° 19.

CERTIFICATE GIVEN BY THE QUEEN OF ROUMANIA

"Her delightful Majesty," as the author calls her, Queen of Roumania, sent the Baroness her appointment, with a eulogistic epistle from the Chamber of Commerce.

H. M. THE QUEEN OF ROUMANIA

Whenever I saw the Queen of Roumania, her wonderful adaptability as a linguist was simply astounding. We conversed in three languages, which she had mastered brilliantly, in fact it was difficult to say which really was her own language. She had a beautiful voice, she was a brilliant musician, and a clever painter. She is one of those few mortals upon whom the gods shower their wealth of genius and talent. Her eldest daughter, the Princess Elizabeth, is equally ravishing, admirable and lovely. Court gossip, fame and rumour have often announced the engagement of Princess Elizabeth. This is not to be wondered at, since she is one of a family exceptionally gifted, with personal beauty, and delightful disposition.

When I was honoured with the royal appointment to Her Majesty, Queen of Roumania, the document came to me accompanied with a most courteous letter from the Chamber of Commerce of the Roumanian Court, which seems impregnated with all the gracious tact and demeanour of the best Courts in Europe. They have probably absorbed the example from the beautiful Queen of Roumania and the most jovial King.

Her Majesty most graciously presented me with her photograph, which I prize most zealously and

keep always before me. None of Her Majesty's sisters can lay claim to such beauty as hers, though the Grand Duchess Cecil, who was previously Grand Duchess of Hesse, and her sister, the Duchess of Montpensier, cousins of King Alfonso of Spain, are still considered very good looking and *distingué*. They have the inherent pride and regal bearing of their mother, the Grand Duchess Marie of Russia, who became the Duchess of Edinburgh.

The way I met Carmen Sylva was very unusual, and quite romantic. It was when I was travelling with my late husband through the Bavarian Alps. I had sauntered away with an interesting book, and choosing a very secluded spot, I found one of those rustic seats, where with my little Pomeranian we made ourselves comfortable. I was deep in the enjoyment of my book when two ladies approached and asked if they might sit beside me, as they had been walking a long distance. So began a very interesting conversation. We discussed politics, ethics, nearly every subject under the sun, and I was completely charmed with the brilliancy of the one lady, who had the most beautiful white hair imaginable. It was with real regret that I said *au revoir*. Later, when I was going to meet my hus-

band, I met one of those picturesque Bavarian men of the Tyrol, who, in his rather clever, delightful, musical dialect, asked me if I knew who the lady was I had been conversing with in so animated a manner.

"That was Carmen Sylva, poetess and Queen of Roumania," he said.

Dear Queen, she sleeps peacefully now. She was a wonderful soul, charitable, kind. She was a Princess of Wied before she married Carl of Roumania. She was another of those brilliant meteors in human form who flash upon a firmament full of smaller stars, yet, she remained to the last the most brilliant and glowing of them all. Nothing could take away from her the burning blaze of her ideals.

I recall another incident, which almost brought myself and my husband into the presence of King Ludwig of Bavaria, he who was called the Mad King. We were travelling through the Bavarian Alps, and reached Innsbruck very late one night, with our postillions, luggage and servants. All the hotels seemed full. At the Innsbruck Hof the amiable Tyrolean host must have taken us for some foreign potentates, for he told us most apologetically that the only vacant room in his house belonged to the King of Bavaria, who was absent on

a hunt, and as His Majesty was not returning on that night we might occupy it if we would. We accepted at once, of course, and were ushered into a room of magnificent proportions perfumed with pine boughs, and with a huge fourposter bed that looked most inviting to the weary travellers. Before a fire of huge pine logs, from a table beautifully carved and so large that the snowy cloth failed to cover half of it, we dined on scrambled eggs, a bottle of Tyrolean wine, delicious black bread and fresh butter, such fare as only a few hours before had been placed on the same table for that handsome, genial, poetical King that many people call Mad King Ludwig of Bavaria. Personally, I cannot believe that he was mad. Eccentric, perhaps, yet a soul that could conceive such adorable ideas, such an enormous wealth of idealism, such artistic sentiment, could be considered mad only by the vulgar, who ever fail to understand the soul of the artist. His one real and only love, the Duchess d'Alençon, who lost her life in that terrible fire in the bazaar at Paris, he could never forget.

Those lovely sisters, the Duchess d'Alençon and the Empress Elizabeth of Austria, were universally admired. When the Empress hunted in Ireland,

every one adored her for her great pluck and her audacious courage. I often saw her, and I with all the rest of the world was shocked inexpressibly at her untimely death at the hands of an assassin.

CHAPTER XV

OTHER MEMORIES IN ENGLAND

One realises, vividly, what this fearful nightmare of war in which Europe now sleeps, really is, as one looks upon those days of royal power and grandeur, when the splendour of Kings was at its height. Shall I ever forget the great ball given in London to which I received a card of invitation, given in honour of Kaiser Wilhelm and his consort! The horror of Zeppelins and submarines was as remote then as the end of the world is to-day.

The Kaiserin was resplendent in a *toilette* of Eastern fabric and colour, wearing the most superb jewels imaginable, a gorgeous figure of an Empress.

The Kaiser in the uniform of a British General, with the order of the Star and Garter on his breast. He was an imposing and benignant figure, though rather stern. He was surrounded by a number of foreign *attachés*. I cannot believe that he is the instigator of the fearful holocaust of human life in Europe. Every one who knows anything about

his personality remembers how he once adored everything English, how warmly he felt towards his royal cousins, and towards the land where his royal mother was born. One must only imagine that some mental earthquake could have changed so wise and so evenly balanced a mind. But, I am, perhaps, anticipating events!

The reception, when in London, to His Imperial Majesty, the German Kaiser, was very cordial. His feelings, however, could only be surmised, not specified; if he had already concluded in his mind his future aggressive thoughts, or if he really came as a guest and friend to the British Isles, is almost impossible to define. I always thought him a friend of dear old England, staunch and true to the colours of his mother's birthplace. Yet —*"erare human est"*—perhaps I saw in his stern graven features something which the world had not recognised, and if a mental earthquake shook the evenly balanced potentate, only Divinity knows. Relationships in war-time do not count; all is absorbed in the only manner, to do the best for one's country always!

I must not become involved in the burning question of the day, which is so remote from these brilliant memories.

It is not difficult, in imagination, to be seated in my box at Buckingham Palace, as I was then, and to find myself looking out upon the ball-room floor.

I see from my box King George dancing gracefully with the Princess Louischen. I see their Majesties the Emperor of Germany and the Dowager Queen Alexandra, in a quadrille. I see Queen Mary of England, in her favourite waltz, wearing her exquisite *toilette* of silver brocade, her diamonds, and the famous Kohinoor, the African diamond, and the largest in the world, worn as a pendant on her brow like a fixed star. It was on this occasion, at the supper, part of it served on a large buffet, that the historical royal gold service of which I spoke was used. Until the early hours of the morning this memorable ball kept up. I am convinced that at no other Court in Europe were festivities to be seen on such a magnificent scale. They were actually unknown at other courts. The Court of King Edward VII set the pace for splendour and wealth of everything, and the Court of King George V maintained it, so long as peace prevailed. I believe it was the last great occasion in England when the Imperial guests the Kaiser and Kaiserin of Germany were fêted and entertained there. It must surely re-

main in their recollection as an everlasting and wonderful souvenir of England, an expression of the good will from the people of all classes in England.

Who could believe that such relationships should ever become hostile.

My memories involve other epoch-making incidents in the history of royalty, that are equally significant.

When Prince Napoleon (Lulu) was brought back to England and laid to rest at Chiselhurst, I received a card of invitation to be present at the Chapel, from the Duke de Bassano, and Mons. Petri, who graciously allotted me a seat there.

The little Chapel was hung in dark purple velvet, with silver escutcheons and emblems of the house of Napoleon. The catafalque standing on a raised pedestal surmounted with draperies of the same colour, on which was laid Prince Napoleon's sword, and nothing but a little modest bunch of violets. Many of Napoleon's *coterie* had come over from Paris to be present at the ceremony, which was very impressive. The clergy in their sumptuous vestments, the melancholy chant of the High Mass, it was all awe-inspiring and sad to a degree. The tragic and dramatic end of the last

of the Napoleons was something never to be forgotten. The initials R. I. P. were the inspiration of a monster cross smothered in Russian and Parma violets. Special trains were arranged at Chiselhurst for our disposal after the funeral services, refreshments were also served, and little mementoes with inscriptions of the date of Prince Napoleon's birth and death on the white and purple satin ribbons tied about them, were distributed.

All disaster, however, is sudden, and that which has come upon us in Europe really seems so remote, even in the comparatively recent years of London's gaiety.

How well I remember the mammoth garden party given by the beautiful Countess of Londesborough at Dunstan Lodge, her lovely town house in Regent's Park. One could hardly imagine one's self in a London house. Huge meadows pasturing prize sheep and cattle, a modern model dairy, great trees and lovely lakes, with beautiful flowers everywhere, these were the surroundings at Dunstan Lodge. In years gone by it had been a royal hunting box, belonging to one of the royal Georges. To-day it is the property of your American millionaire, Otto Kahn.

At this memorable garden party, which was

given to celebrate the laying of the foundation stone of a cathedral in Salisbury, near Scarborough, where the ancestral estates of the Londesboroughs are situated, besides His Majesty King Edward and Queen Alexandra, one met the entire élite of the English aristocracy. The party being for charity, the tickets of admission were five and ten guineas each, or as much more as one wished to give. As many of the *toilettes* worn on this gala occasion were of the House of Frédéric, I was curious and anxious to see them in their proper surroundings. Her Ladyship of Londesborough might have stepped from a frame of one of her family portraits, her presence was so beautiful and so picturesque. Her costume, which I had the honour of designing, was of palest flesh-coloured *crêpe météore,* an over-dress of white Chantilly, an old-world sash of black velvet, an enormous Leghorn hat, with narrow black velvet ribbon, and she carried a bouquet of crimson poppies, blue cornflowers and yellow wheat. Her Ladyship's peculiarity was a rather impetuous manner at times. She always seemed to be in a tremendous hurry. She arrived at my *salons* one day at two in the afternoon.

"My dear, I must have a gown for to-night," she said.

"But, my dear Countess, we have no fairy wands in our establishment," I said.

"Never mind, you must manage it. I am perfectly aware that it will be a perfectly wonderful thing to do, but I know that you will," said Her Ladyship, and disappeared from my sight before I could say a word. Next morning, I received this startling telephone message from her:

"A thousand thanks, but I am already married, it was a great success. Isn't it a great pity that the religion of Brigham Young is not permitted in England."

Lady Londesborough was decidedly impetuous. Her brother, the Earl of Westmoreland, married a step-sister of Lady Warwick, and when he died, some few years ago, the Countess of Londesborough adopted his daughter, and I believe she is now married again. Lady Londesborough's son, Lord Raincliffe, is at the front doing his bit.

Her sweet and girlish daughter, the Lady Irene Dennison, in a frock of purest white *mousseline,* looked a perfect dream of youthful beauty. She was tall, willowy and graceful, a perfect counterpart of her lovely mother.

Another delightful woman of this period was the Viscountess Falmouth, a very handsome woman, and whom I always dressed with great care, because she wore her gowns to perfection. She was very fond of the Burnous mantle, and had a great trick of throwing one over her when driving.

I made her gown for the coronation ceremonies, trimmed with lace and ermine or minnever, which had been in the family for hundreds of years. By deft manipulation I made a very unusual costume of it.

For this occasion Queen Alexandra put aside her mourning, and I made for her a beautiful *toilette* of silver grey, bonnet *en suite,* with sprays of lovely mauve lilacs. The artists who appeared at this garden fête were great public favourites, such as Little Elsie, now Mrs. Ian Boullough, and the inimitable Joe Coyne, who gave the then popular "Merry Widow" dance, and received an ovation. There was also the celebrated violinist, Kubelik, and a number of other artists of equal importance. The garden party ended when the King and Queen arose to partake of tea.

It seems as though these events must have taken place in another world, so tinged with romance do

they seem in these present times of stress and anxiety. Yet, only a few years have passed.

An incident has just reminded me of the personality of the celebrated Lady Brassey, whose yacht, the *Sunbeam,* made her famous. She sent for me once to come to her gorgeous country seat, "Normanhurst," in Sussex. It was really a show place, for her Ladyship in her trips around the world in the *Sunbeam* had picked up the most wonderful oriental rugs and embroideries, and valuable tapestries. The walls of the great reception hall at "Normanhurst," with its enormous Jacobean fireplaces, were hung with priceless treasures. I can almost smell again the penetrating incense sprinkled on those huge blazing logs, before which we were sitting on huge skins of lions and tigers.

Lady Brassey was a sybaritic woman. Her tastes were barbaric, and her almost phenomenal extravagances were unique. Money had no value to her, and she spent it freely with the indulgence that her husband, Sir Thomas Brassey, could easily supply, since he was the Empire's richest ironmaster and railroad king. The foundation of the Brassey fortune was laid by Lord Brassey, his grandfather. Lord Brassey became First Lord of

the Admiralty, and, with Lady Brassey, did a great deal of good in England.

Upon arriving at "Normanhurst," I was first lunched *"en Princesse,"* and then consulted with Lady Brassey on the all-important matter of a Court dress for the presentation of her eldest daughter, now Lady Egerton; also one for herself and for her step-sister. Some time later, I remember being seated on a big four-poster bed in their town house in Park Lane, giving a very poor imitation of Queen Victoria on her throne, while these three ladies paid homage to me. They were practising the difficult deportment which Court etiquette demanded of them, and I found it very amusing criticising their court bows.

Lady Brassey wore a gown of crimson oriental brocade. It was so gorgeous in colour and design that the Court was rather staggered by its daring, yet it suited Lady Brassey's dark beauty to perfection, and as she approached the Queen at the Drawing Room, she looked like an Eastern Empress. Never have I seen such teeth as she had, they were so white and brilliant. I think she was a bit vain of them, for she had a habit of drawing up her lips in a sort of smile which was still not a smile. Her daughter and her step-sister wore

Court dresses that were really splendid counterfoils for Lady Brassey. They were simply pure white, with no other colour to mar their simple and distinguished character. Lady Brassey was drowned at sea, returning from a cruise. She was greatly missed, and many envied me my possession of her autograph, for usually her secretary wrote all her letters.

One of the distinctly British holidays, or rather commemoration days, is Primrose Day. The idea originated through an organisation of the Primrose League Dames. They planned to establish the fame of Lord Beaconsfield, Disraeli, by selecting his favourite flower, the primrose, which blossoms in April, as a national Beaconsfield emblem. His late wife, who was much older than he, was devotedly happy with him, and the idea no doubt originated with her and her coterie of women friends, who conservatively entered into a bond to perpetuate the fame of Lord Beaconsfield, the Prime Minister who made Queen Victoria the Empress of India. His statue is always profusely decorated with primroses on Primrose Day. Politically, the Primrose League Dames are ultra-conservative, as they are in dress. It is a great dis-

tinction for women to belong to the Primrose League Dames.

One can scarcely speak of Lord Beaconsfield without thinking of Mr. Gladstone. Political opponents as they were, they hated with vigour, and made the torch of discord flame high in society. I wonder what they would say to-day, seeing their beloved country in the thrall of a feud which knows neither Whig nor Tory, Liberal nor Conservative.

Lady Muriel de la Warr, "dainty Muriel," as she used to be called, was married at sixteen, and I gowned both her and her sister, who is Lady Winnington, wife of the Governor of India. I remember when as dear little girls, their mother, Lady Brassey, insisted on giving them sealskin jackets. In vain I remonstrated that they were too mature and too costly for such young girls, but Her Ladyship would have her own way. Peace be with her, for her books are still read and very much appreciated. Times are indeed changed since those days of great entertainments given by Her Ladyship as the *grande dame* of the Ambulance Corps of St. John, to which she gave thousands of pounds. Her millions possessed but one charm, and that was to spend them regally and

royally, and no one who ever called upon Lady Brassey for assistance was ever refused a generous gift.

One of my distinguished clients was the wife of the English Ambassador to Germany, Lady Ermyntrude Malet, daughter of the Duke of Bedford. She was a brilliant wit, and was very popular at the German Court, the Kaiser being particularly interested by her charm.

When the Kaiser's sister was married to one of the Hesses, I made her gown of the palest grey pearl damask *fleuri,* the embroideries of which, in real gold, were a true work of art. The court train of this gown was bordered in priceless Russian sable, an heirloom of the late Duchess of Bedford, who in her youth had been one of the bridesmaids of the late Queen Victoria. Her Excellency was one of those *grandes dames* who would never go to a shop, or even to the *salons* of her *modiste.* Everything was taken to her magnificent mansion in Eton Square for her inspection, and there Lady Ermyntrude Malet would choose the *toilettes* for which she was justly famous.

The Kaiser's sister was not tall; she was rather blonde, had a neat little figure, was very modest, very sweet, and very intellectual. Her married

life had been idyllic. She had twin sons twice. Two of her sons have died on the field of honour, and quite recently another son was killed in the war.

For some time the Lady Ermyntrude Malet retired into private life, but recently, at the beginning of the present war, when the Duchess of Somerset organized a Charity Ball, she emerged from her seclusion in the costume of a Court Lady of Spain, which was very gorgeous. The underdress was of historical gold embroidery, and a *basquine* of palest pastel green, brocaded with arabesques of gold, belonged to one of her ancestors. Her collar, mantilla, and high Spanish comb, were all real antiques, as well as her priceless jewels. Even her gloves were embroidered with precious stones. You may be sure she created a sensation at the ball.

I had gowned her for a quarter of a century, and went to her house on the night of the ball to put the finishing touches to this magnificent costume. The interior of her mansion was exquisite. Every table and chair was from a priceless collection of Louis XV furniture. Original paintings by Greuze, Rubens, Hoppner, hung against marvellous tapestries that covered the walls. It was like a glimpse of the Louvre or the Tuileries. Her Excellency,

Lady Ermyntrude Malet, was perhaps more of the old school, having little inclination for the modern frivolities. Since the tragedy of the war, she is working assiduously for a good cause, and spending huge sums for the wounded. I shall always cherish her kindness and amiability, and will never forget her rarely sympathetic nature.

How they crowd into my thoughts, those lovely days, those gracious ladies, who were without exception all that was kind and loyal!

I shall always remember dear Lady Pierri, and her sister, Miss Carlisle, with the greatest personal regard for the many kindnesses they have really shown me. When her clever husband was made a Knight of St. Patrick, I designed the gown for her to be worn on this occasion, made of royal blue velvet, with ermine, crystal and silver embroideries. Notwithstanding their enormous wealth they are most unostentatious. Their donations to all charities are huge, and there is a magnificent and completely equipped hospital in the city of Belfast, which they donated to the city. In their beautiful home in London, there are no men servants. The entire staff are Irish girls. The only two men employed by the household are the coachman and the chauffeur.

Another celebrated figure in London society at this time was Mrs. Alfred Morrison. She was a Miss Schermerhorn; her brother was a celebrated General, and her sister was the wife of one of the Judges of the Supreme Court. Her wealth was fabulous, and materially assisted in making her a prominent figure in London society. Her taste was decidedly French, preferably of the reign of one of the Louis'. She was rather a clever violinist, and a good linguist. She had a peculiar way of walking which gave one the impression that she was an Algerian woman. She never wore corsets, and this added to her general habit of swaying the body slightly as she moved, like a Houri, or like one of the queens of a harem. Her town house in Carlton Terrace boasted of a Carrara marble staircase worth fifty thousand dollars, alabaster urns and vases, paintings by the old masters, a regal fortune in sight everywhere. Her two daughters, though quite beautiful, married rather late in life.

One became Lady White, and the other the Viscountess St. Cyr. The latter was rather intellectual. I made the dresses for them for their coming-out ball, of white *peau de soie,* with scarlet cherries, which became their dark beauty immensely. The favours at this cotillion, supplied by

their mother, Mrs. Alfred Morrison, were very costly. Since Mrs. Morrison has become a widow she has retired into the country.

While I am sitting here assiduously writing, trying to forget nothing which may be of interest, my little Pomeranian dog, a bit of the old country, from Devonshire, comes up and snuggles near me, looks pleadingly into my eyes, as much as to say, "Isn't it time to go to bed?" The little animal makes me think of the words of Lafayette, "The more I see of men, the more I love dogs."

CHAPTER XVI

SOME FAMOUS GRANDES DAMES

HAVE you ever realised what that exotic being, a Grande Dame, really means? One meets them so rarely, and I might almost say that they are nearly extinct.

Paradoxically, a Grande Dame is born, not made. The magic ring of superb dignity and charm in which they live, is really an invisible atmosphere created by their own incarnate nature. I use the term "incarnate nature" as the only fitting explanation of the extraordinary instinct for superior humanity which the Grande Dame represents. She is imbued with the very essence of all that is feminine perfection, she is brought up in a creed which is daily becoming almost extinct, it is the creed of good manners and kindly feeling. Of course, the nursery has incubated her, the child environment has been an atmosphere of superiority, the ultimate education has been a factor. But these are influences kept entirely in the back-

ground, the reserve forces, the fundamental propensities of a real existence.

One of the most perfect Grandes Dames of England, of the old school, of course, was the late Duchess of Buccleuch, Mistress of the Robes of the late Queen Victoria. Her bearing, her voice, softly modulated, her gracious, unostentatious demeanour was an influence that impressed and conquered. More than gracious to every one, yet never familiar, she was the epitome of a Grande Dame. Her mode of gowning, subdued and elegant, was nevertheless a blend of colour which impressed you. You felt that you were in the presence of somebody very lofty, but human. I remember she spoke very kindly to one of my assistants, requesting her to sit down, and chatted very pleasantly with her, asking her many questions as to the well-being of the employees of my house. At the end of the conversation she sent for the footman to bring her a nosegay, and went with her to the door of her own room. This Grande Dame never lost one iota of her dignity. She became distinguished through the veil of her sweet and lovable manner. After all, it is only those of us who are not sure of ourselves, who most fear

familiarity. It is the veneer, the spurious imitation of dignity, that fears to unbend.

The Grande Dame surrounds herself always with great distinction by maintaining the most careful social setting, by guarding rigidly her associations. She is a leader in society because of her broad idea of responsibility to do all the good she can, to influence the minds of less fortunate people whom she meets at times. Your Grande Dame does not wear her jewels at all times of the day. She chooses her garments with a discretion of colour, seeking always to soften, to subdue the glamour of her station. When she walks it is as though she were gliding. She never raises her voice, her goal is perfect harmony.

Those splendid dinners and entertainments for which English society was justly famous, were inspired by the Grande Dame. The character of the menu, the selection of the dishes, had a certain reserve. There was an obvious talent of refinement at these dinners, a clever evasion of the ostentation of wealth. The quality and physical element of these parties were never published to the world. Your Grande Dame regards reticence as the highest duty of good taste. These entertainments, inspired and created by the genius of the Grande

Dame, although rising to every attribute of splendour, redundant with luxury, never had the noisy error of equally grand entertainment given by lesser personages, by social upstarts.

I recall a great reception given by the Duke and Duchess of Buccleuch, where great admiration was excited by some wonderful confectionery. The guests were as delighted as children and paid as much attention to this superb creation of the dinner as if it had been a great event of their lives. Simplicity and sincerity were the elements and associates of the Grande Dame. Food, in those days, was not conceived in the mixed indecision of the present day. Of course the most delightful dinners were to be found across the Channel from England, where one found the Grande Dame of France. She originated there.

The flowers on her dinner table were not of the exotic quality. She preferred to be served in huge vessels of crystal. To soften the glare of an indiscreet world, she preferred the subdued light in crystal chandeliers. There still lingers this quiet motif of Beethoven in some old mansions, in the roomy country houses of France, where the traditions of the Grande Dame survive. It is an at-

mosphere which the parvenus try to get, but are never quite able to imitate.

One of the insistent rules of the Grande Dame has been entirely overthrown by the liberty of modern life. It was a fixed tradition of good manners, that the Grande Dame should never permit a gentleman to smoke in her presence. Now she smokes with them. A smoking room was always provided where a gentleman could retire, and join the ladies afterward in the drawing room, where music, politics, and a little bit of scandal were enjoyed. When I say scandal, however, I do not mean all that the word implies to-day. Your Grande Dame never permitted any flagrant discussions, and any one overstepping the discretion of her social laws was ostracised. This, of course, was done to protect the daughters, to prevent them from hearing the chatter of the Clubs.

Another very distinguished Grande Dame of England was the Duchess of Northumberland, daughter of the Duke of Argyle. She was very tall, very stately, with an air that was immune to anything but regal traditions. Her circle was entirely restricted, there were no intruders, because she created a society for herself. She personally scrutinised very carefully every invitation sent out

by her secretary. Only on rare occasions did she reverse the invitations of her secretary. On these occasions her list was augmented, but only for men who were scholars, the Catholic Church dignities, Cardinals, the Jesuit Princes of the soul-saving community, a background of intellectual humanity for the élite.

The period of the Grande Dame, which I fear is passing away, had its tradition of correct conversation. They studied the proper mode of expressing themselves, they even established a fashion of spelling. They attended modern French discourses, and they used a phraseology superbly refined. They spoke almost in whispers. They devoted hours to having romances read to them, after which literary discussions took place between them. After all, these Grandes Dames being women, they had their *coteries*. They were not flippant in the sense of that word to-day, but they occasionally admitted to their inner circle certain insolent spirits of literature, or so-called philosophy. They paid much formal respect to religious observances. It was a prerogative of the Grandes Dames, exercised only on special occasions, to permit themselves to accept the homage of the crowds. This

was extended to them only sometimes in a moment of oversight by the crowds themselves.

There was in England a type of arrogant aristocrats, who were not always to the manner born, and these women tried very hard to enter the charmed circle of the Grandes Dames, but were unsuccessful.

One cannot excuse the Grande Dame of the charge of haughtiness. This characteristic was particularly evident when she appeared at Court. It was on these occasions that the Grande Dame asserted her rights, which were beyond and above her rank. There were absolute Duchesses and indiscreet Duchesses, who, when they met at Court, clashed. A case in point was when the absolute Duchess of Buckingham and Chandos met the usurper. The latter was deliberately cut by her. The usurping Duchess, however, who only wished to usurp the rights of her rank, didn't care. She had a commanding figure, she was a wonderful personality, standing nearly six feet two. She could walk for miles and miles on her own undisputed Scotch territory, which some of the Grandes Dames could not do. She could hew a tree with ease, she was a keen sportswoman, and when she died, recently, she left one daughter, who married

and divorced an Austrian nobleman. This Duchess was colossally rich, and when the late Duke died he left her everything excepting the property which was not entailed. She cut the timber down upon these Scotch properties. She removed a wonderful organ from Stafford House, dismantled the whole mansion, and did many quixotic things which delighted the scandalmongers. Her first husband was accidentally shot on the late Duke's estate. Her marriage to the Duke was something of a daring venture. She came to America with him on his yacht and they were married in Florida. She was a Grande Dame by rank, but not by incarnate nature. Perhaps she was the subject of censure by inferior people. She spent enormous sums in Paris and London upon her gowns, yet she was Scotch, and that means she was not too liberal. I know that she was economically inclined, and with her brother, attended personally to all her business affairs. She burned a pile of documents relating to her inheritance, and this being in violation of a Court Order, she was sent to Holloway Jail for contempt of Court, for a month. She had a very merry time there. She was allowed to furnish her own room, ordered her own food, and kept her maid with her. She received whom she liked, the

only restriction being that she could not go outside the prison.

Another notorious Grande Dame was the Duchess "Bob." Being somewhat notorious as the "sporting Duchess," she was not admitted to the sacred precincts of the Grandes Dames of tradition. Her language was very strong, liberally mixed with undesirable epigrams. She lived most of the time at her racing stables at Newmarket. She never missed a race, where she was easily recognisable by her mannish costumes, which she wore with the greatest ease. Being very rich, she lost like a sportsman, without a murmur. Her stables were kept like drawing rooms, and her grooms and servants adored her. I believe the late king was a great friend of hers, for he also loved horses and races. She married a second time, a prominent banker, about thirty years younger than she was, and very handsome.

The present Duchess of Montrose is really a typical Grande Dame, and her lovely daughters and sons are indeed great social favourites.

Then there is the present Duchess of Bedford, who was a daughter of a Dean of Bombay. She also is among the Grandes Dames of England, extremely clever, ultra-conservative and especially

particular about her social code. Although her early youth was passed in the modest fashion in India, she seems to the manner born. When the present Duke of Bedford proposed to her in India, he was the Marquis of Tavistock, and his chances of inheriting the dukedom seemed rather remote, till his brother died very suddenly.

The dowager Duchess of Bedford was and is still a remarkable woman, a Grande Dame, very exclusive and very handsome. Her sister is Lady Henry Somerset, a remarkable orator, who has travelled extensively in the United States. Both the Duchess of Bedford and her sister, Lady Henry Somerset, were daughters of the beautiful Countess Somers, a direct descendant of that lovely Quaker family of Elizabeth Fry.

The Duchess of Wellington and the Duchess of Hamilton were both Grandes Dames, the latter being the daughter of the Duchess of Manchester, who later became the Duchess of Devonshire. She was very fond of the sporting world, and lacked repose and distinction because her pursuits and pleasures were perhaps more boisterous than the traditions of her rank demanded. Her husband, the late Duke of Hamilton, was, on his mother's side, of royal blood. She was Marie, Duchess of

Baden. He was one of the richest land-owners in Great Britain and Scotland. The present Duchess married a second time, her land steward, and I believe they are intensely happy. Their daughter, Lady Marie Hamilton, who was the greatest heiress in England, married the Marquis Graham, heir to the dukedom of Montrose. Like all other British aristocrats, he is doing his best for the good cause.

This sketch of the Grandes Dames of England would not be complete without reference to the tall, willowy, and *distingué* woman, the Duchess of Portland. She is the one Grande Dame whose code of ethics succeeded in keeping out of her charmed presence all doubtful and uncertain classes. Welbeck-Abbey, her residence, was indeed the most desirable castle in England. The former Duke of Portland immortalised it by building in the castle gorgeous subterranean *salons*. The Duchess presided with grace in the midst of her artistic environments. She was a woman of elegance and simplicity. She always wore in her girdle some Malmaison carnations. They were her floral code. Her son, the Marquis of Tichbourne, and her daughter, Lady Bentinck, look exactly like His Grace the Duke of Portland. He

was the Master of the Horse and Knight of the Star and Garter.

Their marriage was a story of love at first sight. She was Miss Dallas Yorke, and the Duke saw her standing on the platform of a small station in England. He was struck by her distinction, her lovely blue eyes, her tall, graceful figure, and she has not changed much. She is always delightfully and simply gowned, her hair is beautiful. She is regal-looking, is especially gracious and amiable, and is by all means the most perfect type of the Grande Dame left in England.

CHAPTER XVII

SOME RECOLLECTIONS OF ROYAL CHILDREN

SINCE the children of royalty have to be brought up, like other children who consider themselves less fortunate, they are put through the same child experiences. Being well brought up, they are sweet and simple babies, who are not permitted to realise that they are playing in the shadow of the throne. I was privileged to know most of the little princes and princesses of England, when they were mere children. I have played with them in the royal nursery, shared the accessories of their royal kindergarten.

There were two nurseries in whatever palace the children happened to be. The day nursery was a lofty room. The walls were hung with harmless etchings and nursery rhymes. The toys and the books, in large array, all had their places on shelves or in drawers. There were little white tables with little white chairs. There was plenty of floor-room, and the general effect was airy, bright, or-

derly. Adjoining the nursery and part of the children's suite was the music room. There was hardly any furniture in this room, but it was artistically arranged, so that the young princes and princesses could strum on the piano to their heart's content. I don't think it hurt the piano much, for, of course, it was not altogether of the first quality. Briefly, such was the Day Nursery.

The Night Nursery, where the little princes and princesses slept, was a very little room. It was so small that one realised how easy it would be to keep it in order. Each little kiddie had a white cot, each had a separate chest of drawers, each had a stand where boots and shoes were kept, each had a looking-glass. A plain straw matting covered the floor, and the general colour of the room was white and rose. There were three easy-chairs, put there for the head nurse and her assistants, usually two. On the windows were white muslin curtains. The nurses or the nursery governess were always present when the children enjoyed their games. The uniforms worn by the nurses were white linen, and spotless white caps.

The royal children themselves were always very simply dressed. The young princes in their babyhood always wore plain cotton frocks, later they

were dressed in little overalls and tiny slippers. These, of course, were their nursery dresses. They had wonderfully good times together, especially when they had games with their nurses in the big room where there was no furniture to bother them. The nursery was on the third floor of Buckingham Palace, overlooking Buckingham Palace garden. There were five huge windows which overlooked the lovely grounds. Sometimes the royal children got away from their too-zealous nurses and romped about regardless of what the stately head nurse in her immaculate uniform would say or think.

The most refractory child, perhaps, was Princess Marie, who was rather self-willed, but her little German nursery maid usually understood her mood, and I believed they compromised very easily.

What sweetly simple and well brought up children these little mites were. How they enjoyed teasing the nurse-maids, and being teased in return. The boys would be found riding furiously on dangerous rocking-horses, or directing a battle with tin soldiers, or pretending to play football, while the little girls were seated in eager silence, listening to the nursery governess, who was reading to them from Andersen's Fairy Tales. The nursery, of course, was not far from their mother's bed-

room, and they used to make secret pilgrimages there.

The queen thoroughly dislikes smartness for children, so their clothes were very simple but serviceable. I remember seeing the little Princess Marie, her hair hanging down her back in lovely wavy curls, being dressed for a walk in the Buckingham Palace grounds, and I was impressed with the fact that her boots were hobnailed, because it happened to be a damp morning. They were all brought up charmingly, absolutely free from any ceremony. They were not imbued with militarism, or altruism. The purpose seemed to be that they should be brought up to long and useful lives of health and happiness. There was no ceremony in their relations with their parents. They called the king and queen mother and father. The children were all fair, with that peculiar freshness of complexion which one so often sees in English children. One of their chief amusements was to tease the royal footmen, who to them were obnoxiously stately. Prince John was very fond of wrestling with his elder brothers, but he always wanted his own way, and they usually gave it to him.

Princess Marie was a tall and graceful child, and was treated with a great deal of awe by her broth-

ers and sisters because of her calm and aristocratic bearing. She had her own bedroom, furnished in pure white, and yet very simple. The room contained a couch, a chair, a dressing-table on which was her ivory dressing-set. The table had a glass top, and there were always fresh flowers, plucked from the conservatory, on this table. It was a perfect little nest for a princess, containing the books chosen for her by her governess, her writing materials upon her little rosewood desk, photos of her beloved parents and her intimate friends upon the mantel shelf. The photographs of her grandmother and great-grandmother were very conspicuously displayed in the room. Her little upright piano was also in white. One can realise how ideal her childhood conditions were in these delightful surroundings.

It was the custom at a certain hour of the day for the family barouche to be sent for, and the royal children were driven out for a constitutional in Hyde Park, accompanied by the head nurse and her assistant, wearing the grey uniform of the street with tiny black bonnets. The speed of the carriage was very carefully restrained by the coachmen. As the carriage passed under Marble Arch, the sentries would salute, and the boys would

return it. The princes were usually dressed in sailor suits, the princesses in white.

I recall how delightful the little Princess Marie was with a doll which I dressed for her. Her acknowledgment of the present had in it the quality of graciousness which one expects from royalty, but it was a very charming letter. Of course, these children were wonderfully guarded, always protected from any outside influence that could be undesirable, yet they were perfectly natural children. They delighted in fighting, romping, and having a general good time. If they were not always in the mood of obedience, they were punished, like other children.

The two older princes, the Duke of Clarence and the Duke of York, when they were boys of nine or ten years old, were sent on a trip around the world in care of a guide who had long been associated with the British Court. This gentleman was sent with them to make them behave, and they did. From him I learned a great deal about the characteristics of the two royal princes. He told me that the Duke of Clarence was in every sense of the word a perfectly lovable boy. He gave very little trouble to his tutor, and from all I could hear, much less trouble than Prince George, who was

not quite so easily managed. These traits in after years showed themselves very strongly. Prince George became King of England, and his boyhood was the starting-point of those little childish outbursts of temper, which indicated that he would always insist on having his own way. The trip around the world proved a very delightful one upon the whole. There would have been a great deal of homage paid to them en route if this had been permitted; their royal parents, however, were very particular upon the point that no ostentation of ceremony should be shown them. Prince George, later Prince of Wales, now King of England, had a very retiring manner in his boyhood, which has still clung to him. It is reported on one occasion, when the little princes were anchored on board ship near a foreign wharf, a number of poor children had gathered there, hoping to get a glimpse of the royalty. Both the young princes being on deck, their tutor said to them, "Throw them some money." The Duke of Clarence promptly put his hand in his pocket and threw a handful of coins upon the wharf. Prince George hesitated. His hand went into his pocket, but he reconsidered, saying, as he walked away, "I think I will hold on to mine."

Years ago, when the children of King Edward VII and Her Majesty Queen Alexandra were growing up, I was privileged to visit the royal nursery. The child of this royalty who chiefly attracted my attention was Princess Maud, youngest daughter of Queen Alexandra, who is now Queen of Norway. She was a plump, short little girl, with a rather noisy manner, and was regarded in the nursery as a tomboy. Her laugh was infectious, and it made the nursery gayer. She was a very smart little girl, and her special attendant, Miss W., had her hands full.

I recall one day being at Marlborough House, about the time of the engagement of the Duchess of Fife. The Duchess brought her fiancé into the apartment of the young princesses. I heard the then Princess Louise call out, rather pointedly, to one of the nurses:

"Take these kids away, they are so noisy," and in a titter of laughter the younger royal children disappeared. Princess Louise herself, at that time, was only eighteen years of age, the younger girls about thirteen and fifteen. I wonder to-day, if these royal children take the joy in their retrospection of that wonderful youth of theirs, so beautifully guarded and so educationally inspired.

THE ROYAL CHILDREN

The author, before going to Australia, had many opportunities to see and speak with these children when they were still Duke and Duchess of York.

I knew Queen Marie as a child, she was the apple of her parents' eyes. Her brothers adored her, and she was with them always. They fought together, they quarrelled together, they grew up in a certain imprudent intimacy. Her Majesty in her childhood joined in all the games of the boys, she was a real child of nature. Her nursery governess and her finishing governess was Madame Brica, and she told me that she sometimes had great difficulty in curbing the exuberance of this high-spirited royal child. During her childhood, Her Majesty was a universal favourite in the little village of Richmond and Kingston-on-Thames, where these royal children were brought up. This place still has a great attraction for Her Majesty, for her beloved mother, the Duchess of Teck, is buried in that vicinity. She was indeed a lovable and charming mother, who entered into the fun of everything that her children loved. Her Majesty's handsome brother, whom she adored, Prince Francis of Teck, was a gay young spark, and many were the youthful scrapes out of which she helped him. He died only a few years ago in the fine flower of his manhood, and his sister grieved very much for him. Her eldest brother, the present Duke of Teck, married the daughter of the first

Duke of Westminster. The children of the Duke of Teck are naturally also of royal blood, as are the children of the youngest brother, who married the brother of the Duchess of Albany.

Royal children are not different in any way from all children. They have moments, too, when they lack repose, when they are boisterous, vivacious, obdurate, when they shirk their lessons, and when they overeat themselves with candy. In childhood they weave fairy tales, in maidenhood or manhood they weave romance or tragedy, the children of yesterday are the grown-up children of to-day.

The royal children of Italy have been brought up under the personal supervision of their adored mother, who was a very clever woman, the daughter of a Montenegrin prince, Nicholas, the father of several queens of Europe. She always personally assists at their lessons, shares their indoor and outdoor sports, rides with them in the riding school. Athletic sports is the principal pastime for the little princes and princesses. The boys look forward with great pleasure to playing soldiers. Particularly are the children adored by the mountaineer regiment of the Bersaglieri, that handsome regiment wearing green plumed feathers

in their hats. The little Italian Crown Prince is already a lieutenant of his own regiment.

The games which royal children enjoy are naturally expensive and elaborate. They have the blocks to build wonderful castles, material for fortresses, for feudal ruins. In a lake of real water they put mechanical swans that swim around, or, they are directing armies of toy soldiers. Sometimes they go fishing on miniature lakes filled with decoy ducks, or they sail their little boats. Especially do they love animals, rabbits, dogs and ponies. The Shetland ponies of the royal children are almost a necessity to their happiness, and dogs of all kinds romp with them. And yet, we observe that as time went on, and the young princes of royal blood became a little older, they played croquet, lawn-tennis, rather bad football, and they learned to swim. Englishmen are usually good sportsmen because of their early training. It was a standing joke in London to describe the early morning riders in the park as the "Liver Brigade."

The tutor of the royal children of England was Mr. Hanson, a German. The morning usually began with lessons in the schoolroom, which was a high-ceiled big one, containing a globe and all the maps of Europe.

His Majesty George V sent the two older boys of his family quite early in life into the army and navy. Very often these striplings were put to the test. Of course, they were good linguists, speaking German and French fluently. To learn French the present young Prince of Wales was sent to France in the family circle of the Marquis and Marquise de Brétuille. The Marquise was born in America. The Prince of Wales naturally became the intimate friend of French boys. He learned and saw Germany at its best, going to Heidelberg and the smaller towns when he was quite young.

The days of nursery rhymes have gone, and I wonder if these grown-up children of royalty ever think of those days when they used to sing with such vigour the baby rhymes of "Goosie, Goosie Gander."

CHAPTER XVIII

MINISTERS AND PRIME MINISTERS I HAVE KNOWN

No one will deny that a man who becomes Prime Minister of any nation must be a clever man; but as we women govern our admiration of men by other qualities than those political, my impressions of the Prime Ministers I have known may not add to their diplomatic distinction. In diplomacy, in political resource, of course, they were all brilliant. I imagine that it was something of a strain for the kings and queens whom they served to establish congenial relations with them.

Since I lived so long in England, my first recollection of Prime Ministers is Mr. Gladstone. My impression of Gladstone may surprise some people who were overwhelmed by his public oratory in the House, but I am convinced that he possessed a pride so sensitive that it made him timid at times, especially prudent upon discussing any subject with which he was not fully acquainted. Mr. Gladstone's opposition to Lord Beaconsfield was

maintained chiefly by a certain instinctive subtlety with which he stuck to the one vulnerable point in Beaconsfield's armour. He often remarked that he had nothing to say regarding the precocity of Disraeli's doctrines, and he often worked upon this noncommittal attitude until his manner assumed the proportions of a personal insult.

Notwithstanding the fact that they were opponents, they visited at the same houses. When they met in this way, their indignation was galvanised by the political cross-current of their ambitions. In their debates in the House, tact, if not prejudice, would often prevent the presence, either in the gallery or on the floor of the house, of the uninvited.

It was when, upon special invitation, I found myself on the terrace of the Houses of Parliament, that I would sometimes see these great men, Mr. Gladstone and Lord Beaconsfield, moving about in deep thought. From my woman's point of view, I often wondered at the complete difference between these men. Mr. Gladstone was a great admirer of the fair sex, and he always took especial pains to charm them by his wit, by his satirical mannerisms. It was his special gift to make any lady he was talking to believe that she was the only

woman in the world. I often wondered at the audacity towards women of this great statesman. These moments of frivolity, however, were only the little sideplays of a man whose whole career was one of great ambition and great purpose. I consider he was the greatest politician in England since Lord Palmerston and Pitt. He, single-handed, managed Great Britain's political ship, steered it clear of many rocks. He was a great friend and admirer of Bismarck, of Monsieur Thiers, and Cardinal Rampolli was his warm and earnest friend. I am wondering, as I recall these qualities of Mr. Gladstone and of Lord Beaconsfield, whether if these men had been at the helm of State, the English Empire would have been involved in this terrible war.

Mr. Gladstone was a tall, raw-boned, broad-shouldered man. His grey hair was sparsely combed over his intelligent forehead. He had a rather prominent nose, and he was usually dressed in a suit of black broadcloth. I suppose that his coat would have passed for a Prince Albert, but it was a compromising Prince Albert. He always wore the broad, white collar of the thirties and a black satin stock. When he walked abroad, down the Mall, he always seemed in deep

thought, walking with his hands behind his back. When he would stride along St. James, through Bond Street, he would stop and look into the shops, where photographs of pretty women were displayed. He would look leisurely at the passersby, greet a friend here and there, and he was distinctive chiefly because of a strange black cape, fashioned in a period of the thirties, which fluttered in the wind as he walked, like the wings of a huge bat. He succeeded in impressing the people with an idea of their own versatility, and incidentally of the composite quality of his own power. When a debate of importance in which he figured was to occur, when it was most formidable and of extraordinary length, it was an unwritten law among the members of the House to cheer him enthusiastically. Undoubtedly he was a great orator. He was very fond of using scriptural texts, and his interpretation of a moralist disarmed many. Morally, he himself was not handicapped by his personal faith in his own moral teachings. The defects of his character would have been incomprehensible, if he had not been so strong-minded. The end of his career resembled a dramatic performance in which the chief characters all make their exit in the last act.

The attitude of Mr. Gladstone to Queen Victoria was somewhat complex because they were entirely different intellectual elements. The Queen had not lived an agitated life. Her people loved her, and Mr. Gladstone did his best to keep up the traditions of her career, to maintain the character of prevailing etiquette. He created the custom of morning visits to Her Majesty. There could be no complication at such an hour, and his wisdom in this ceremony was applauded by the English public.

Mr. Gladstone demonstrated his love of simplicity, both in his literary and architectural activities, for he had many alterations made in the public buildings. When the people of London, civilians and soldiers, were massed around the House of Commons, they saluted him. His open glance would frankly take in the homage of the multitude, and he would go calmly on, and enter the precincts of Westminster. He was very fond of reading the Psalms. His greatest speeches were always original and impressive. I was told that he was particularly strict about his office details. In his private office he frequently dictated orders and diplomatic despatches, and he kept his private correspondence neatly tied up.

I knew him when he had passed the meridian of life, when his word was law, when his actions spoke loudly and yet no one questioned them. His political standards were governed by two immutable ideas—his own will, and the will of the people. His chief object was to suppress or adjust all individual opinions to his own supreme, liberal ideas, and to develop his own influence throughout Great Britain. He was a very rich man, having supplemented his wealth by a great acquisition of property. He often said that the queen had not given him free reign, but he loved his Sovereign though she had compelled him to do things which often were repugnant to him. Heaven had endowed him with a great gift of endurance, and, of course, he did not succumb to the load heaped upon him by his political opponents. Mr. Gladstone was a man who had a natural love of intrigue, and he had always been conversant with the politics of France and Germany. His idea of monarchical power was almost a religious dogma, and those who rejected his ideas were pursued with vigour. His opponents often smiled at his defiance, because he would seize by authority, and find himself incapable of using his power over that which he had seized. His intel-

lect delighted in eloquence, for he was a serious man, a devoted husband.

There was scarcely a man in the House of Parliament who did not fear the determined look in Mr. Gladstone's eyes. He was great in thought, but in feeling he remained a Scotchman to the end of his life. Like all Scotch people, he was imaginative, he raised altars to his ideals. His own life betrayed his illusions sometimes, and his romantic instincts led him into sentimental by-ways. Looking over his achievements to-day, his administration as Prime Minister becomes comprehensible. He did nothing effectual but he was a devout Christian, and he could not comprehend any form of government but a monarchy.

Mr. Gladstone's relations with royalty were cordial, but I think he knew that his Queen merely used his services, and had no other sympathy for him. He, however, knew the value of the men who were in office with him, for he had sounded their character. The men he appointed were judiciously selected for their diplomatic missions. He only demanded firmness and loyalty to him, and that his diplomatic officers should not concern themselves either with the objections or the resistance of other nations.

The English people, of course, knew that he refused the peerage, but he was a very headstrong man. No matter how uncertain the political horizon looked, Mr. Gladstone always feigned ignorance of coming events. He was a moralist, but he never harangued anybody upon that theme, and he freely ridiculed them. Frequently Mr. Gladstone journeyed to his Scottish home with his family, to enjoy a thorough rest from his strenuous parliamentary shouting, and congenial friends would be invited. The public had great interest in his private home life. He was a prudent man, but invariably he exceeded the proportions of his virtue; generally speaking, he was cordial but sometimes he limited his intercourse to a purely conventional exchange of civilities, so that he never lost the good graces of his friends. His political intuitions were keen.

My own knowledge and acquaintance with Mr. Gladstone, though slight, impressed me that he was a very ambitious man and an ardent partisan of all that gave him a chance of being witty. He knew that the throne of England was quite secure, for there could be no honour with an alliance of any foreign power. His ideas of being dependent upon the bounty of France was repellent to him,

and to-day, if some have lost their thrones, have fled to foreign countries and sought refuge in the kingdoms of their friends, and have found comfort and ease in the present circumstances and being near to the verge of bankruptcy, well he has kept the crown. The series of exiled monarchs to whom England has given hospitality, the Sovereigns of former times, were not familiar with revolutions and their ignorance made them fearless; they despised precautions. They were improvident, they saved nothing for a rainy day. They scorned all business and looked with contempt upon all. If they lost their throne and fled to foreign countries and sought refuge in their friends' homes, their respectabilities were matters of chance, and all this Gladstone foresaw, and acted accordingly with honours and affections. His memory must be classed in recording all he has done for Great Britain and Ireland. The king and the Prince of Wales would sit in the gallery and listen to his eloquent speeches with great pleasure.

Of an entirely different temperament and character was Disraeli. He was a complex man, and of course, as every one knows, a great favourite of Queen Victoria, who adored him for making her Empress of India. The English people them-

selves quickly recognised in him a conservative leader, and his triumph at the Congress of Berlin was a great political victory.

My personal acquaintance with Lord Beaconsfield and his wife remains very vivid in my memory. Lord Beaconsfield had a very wonderful personality, exceptional magnetism and a grace of manner that always put every one at their ease. He adopted the clothes and appearance of a man living in the period of the Georges. He had very little hair on his head, when I knew him, an extraordinary wisp of a moustache, well-shaped hands, and a deportment that made you at once understand that you were in the presence of an accomplished gentleman.

I remember chatting with him once in Rotten Row, and we discussed the success of Wagnerian Opera at Covent Garden. Lord Beaconsfield was very fond of Wagner, but I remember he deplored the lack of refinement in the production and the singers at that time. Especially I remember he wore very tight trousers, high-heeled patent leather shoes, white spats, a bell-shaped silk hat, and yellow kid gloves with black stripes. Altogether he was a "Dandy." Lady Beaconsfield, although in appearance a Grande Dame, did not go into so-

ciety very much. Her life was one of adoration and love for her husband, so that her time was devoted entirely to him. She was the acme of refinement, tall, elegant, and when I met her she was growing a little grey. Of course, the ladies admired His Lordship very much, and he may have had his little heart affairs but they were looked upon as mere unimportant indiscretions. I am inclined to think that it will not do to let the world look at him through a moral spy-glass.

Lord Beaconsfield's chaste affections for Her Majesty made him a favourite at Windsor Castle, and he rejoiced in this show of good will from the Queen. In literature, which was one of the charms of his busy life, the reality of his theme, the truth of his characterisation crowned his work with success. His books were translated into many languages, and in Germany his "Lothair" was widely read, the theme of matrimonial love turned into friendship, was sublime! His wife was much older than he was, but she inspired him. Her infatuation gleamed through all his books. A peculiarity of Lord Beaconsfield's literature is that it always retained the highest standards of delicacy, and his books have retained their literary influence to-day. All sorts and conditions of men have been admirers

of their quality. The Queen delighted in them herself. I, for one, admired them so much that I have re-read "Lothair" once a year.

It seems to me that Lord Beaconsfield exerted a dominant influence upon the destinies of our modern literature.

His social success was dazzling, because he was exquisitely eloquent and polite, and there was a fiction to the effect that Lord Beaconsfield was regarded as a survivor of a mysterious and superior civilisation. The ladies of the Court of St. James were proud of their power to attract the notice of this distinguished nobleman, and the homage he paid them was of a kind nobody could criticise. The Queen's acceptance of his devotion was naturally a confirmation of his correctness in good manners, for Queen Victoria was ever critical, both as regards to form and conversation. She always exacted minute attention to the details of civility, and the manners of Disraeli displayed the peculiar gallantry of the epoch. His chivalry found its source, no doubt, in a romanticism which he had absorbed from other countries, like France, for instance, and there were all the symptoms of a moral in his romances.

Disraeli was the man of the hour, at a time when

such a man was most needed. I think his genius for statesmanship was considerably helped by his qualifications as an author, and I doubt whether, without the latter qualification he could have so well comprehended the political situation of his country. How much the ladies thought of him is shown in the survival of that organisation of women called "The Primrose League." It exists in a spirit of love for his memory, to do him honour. It perpetuates his reputation for estheticism, with which he surrounded himself in his early youth. Long before he entered politics he had devoted many years to meditation and study, so that when he found himself in the political arena he could stand apart from his politics and live an intellectual life which extricated him and brought to light the ideals of his condition.

His contemporaries have declared him to be always real and natural. Of course, he aroused the jealousy of his opponents, but he cared nothing for their reproaches. The finest sentiments of his character he distributed lavishly among his Lords and Commons. While he was compelled to fight the party spirit, his pride was never assailed.

While I am thinking about the great men who were leaders of national life, I recall meeting

Mons. Thier, who was the president of France. He was a modest little man, inclined to be stout, and he looked out mildly upon the world through his gold spectacles. Being a great lawyer, he had all the technical knowledge necessary to overcome the difficult political questions which confronted him, and his persuasive powers of conversation made him very popular with the ladies. To France, the republican form of government was new, and he certainly administered it brilliantly, for it was a diplomatic chaos.

I conversed with him at the Élysée, Paris, during a very large reception, and I remember that he avoided politics adroitly, made nice little observations about the ladies' gowns, and I noticed that the general crowd did not interest him very much, but he was suave and gracious to a degree. Later I met Monsieur Félix Faure, a handsome, debonair, elegant man, smart to a fault, and a great friend of the ladies. He died very suddenly and too early in life, and the truth of the scandal which his death evoked may be questioned. I believe the French people liked him greatly.

It was when I was a child, perhaps eight years old, that I saw Bismarck, the greatest living statesman of that time. The incident of this occa-

sion reveals the fact that though he was a man of an iron will, he had his soft spots. My parents had been invited to the country seat of a big landowner, whose property was next door to the country residence of the then modest gentleman, Herr von Bismarck. His estate was called "Schoenhausen," and was about five miles from Berlin. With some other children we were playing hide-and-seek on the edge of this property, when suddenly he appeared standing before me. To my child vision he was just a tall gentleman. Rather autocratically he put his hand on my very abundant hair and said:

"What are you doing here?"

I remember the sternness of his manner made me tremble, and I told him that I had lost my way, explaining to him that we were the guests of his neighbour.

"Yes," he said, smilingly, "but you are not my guest at all."

"Please excuse me, sir," I said.

"Well, never mind, we'll forget it," he said, and he took me by the hand, and we walked together. I prattled, and he listened, and then he gave me a smack on my head, and a beautiful bunch of

grapes. Then, he lifted me over the shrubbery out of his own grounds.

Bismarck was a wonderful husband and father, his only daughter, Baroness von Rantzau, I believe still survives him, and his two sons. Their mother, the Princess Bismarck, was a wonderfully charming and clever woman, whom I met years ago. Bismarck was born on the first of April, universally accepted as All Fools' Day, yet he did not fool himself or others during his life. In commemoration of his birthday fires are lighted on the heights of every mountain, on his anniversary, to show he is not forgotten, and to justify the reverence in which he is held.

I cannot close this chapter without a passing word concerning Mr. Asquith, the former Prime Minister of England. He was rather commanding in appearance, his white hair giving an air of dignity to him. He has rather a broad nose, a very steady and very serious look in his eyes, and in general appearance is a benevolent figure. He was very much liked by his Party.

Every one knows the reputation for cleverness which his wife, his second wife, by the way, who was Miss Tennant, has. She was a great friend of all that was French and foreign. Mr. Asquith

survived those times when men changed their political parties as freely as they change their gloves, and he was always among the "true blues." As Prime Minister he contributed no novelty in scruples. He was famous for gallantry, for tenderness, for sentimental influences.

Mr. Lloyd George, in his new office as Prime Minister, was the victim of much grumbling from a great many families, especially Welsh, they being his native neighbours. He was very clever, a small lawyer, brought up in an obscure town in Wales. His sudden rise to a leading political position in the world is very admirable. His wife is a typical housewife, and his children are well educated and very smart in their ways. They are turning out to be good climbers. Lloyd George in appearance is a small man, of sturdy physique. His iron-grey hair is worn in a rather artistic fashion, and he maintains a kindly smile on his lips. He has an enormous broad forehead. His bosom friend is Lord Reading, and I used to meet them often walking through St. James Park on their way from the House. They seemed very merry and chatty.

CHAPTER XIX

THE LAST LONDON SEASON BEFORE THE WAR

If you want kindness, be kind;
If you want truth, be true.
What you give, you will find;
Your world is a reflex of you.

In poetry one reads the prophetic impulse of the race. There were no poets to prophesy the future in that brilliant London season of 1914. No one, not even those who were in the chronic state of British pessimism, could foresee the disaster that came upon us in the summer of 1914. Who could conceive, that behind the glory of England's supreme confidence in herself at this time, the great black clouds of war were slowly gathering.

The season of 1914 in London began its usual course of social amusement and grandeur, preceding the Christmas holidays of 1913. The new year followed close after the jingling bells of Santa Claus and his reindeers. The church bells of Merrie England announced the coming of 1914 with a chal-

lenge of joyousness and prosperity that had no jangling note in them. In the midst of the merriment at the Christmas house-parties, there was no thought of war. So the old year was driven out with uproarious delight, and the new year—1914—came in smiling, confident, unruffled by any thought of the disaster that came ultimately like a thunderbolt in a clear sky.

I don't think London was ever more brilliant and gorgeous socially. The season of 1914 was the most wonderful I can remember during all the years I have lived in London. The opening of Parliament brought the social leaders to town. The wives of the members of the Lower and Upper Houses opened their *salons* earlier than usual, planning their entertainments so as to be able to run down to their country places for the Easter holidays. There was the usual envy and ambition among the most brilliant and beautiful women, those who were débutantes and those who were newly married, to be presented at the first Drawing Room of the season, in February. These Court presentations were always eagerly looked forward to, for in their train followed the early dances, concerts, and receptions of the season. The first Drawing Room at Buckingham Palace initiated the season. Society was

flippant, gay and festive, and nobody dreamt of missing any one of the brilliant entertainments.

The subscriptions for the Opera season at Covent Garden had never been bigger. Every box was taken, there was not a seat to be had. Your horseshoe curve at the Metropolitan Opera House in New York resembles very much, in its fashionable importance, the display of diamonds and gowns one sees at Covent Garden during the London season. As in New York, the London subscribers at the Opera have their notables, their fabulous wealth in diamonds and pearls to display, their cavaliers, and their bored millionaires. I remember a wonderful *toilette* of turquoise velvet *miroir* worn by Lady Weyms, to whom the Marquis de Sovaral was paying homage. Then there was that wonderful *toilette* of Lady de Trafford, of white jet and similes, with the elegant figure of Lord Vane-Tempest in the background. Then there was Mrs. Newhouse, with Mrs. Bradley Martin, in her box, wearing a shell-pink *crêpe de chine,* with those wonderful pearls, and one, single crimson rose.

Among the distinguished women of beauty and aristocratic lineage whose presence in this horseshoe curve at Covent Garden is a memory never to be

forgotten, was the Countess of Ripon, a woman of wonderful Junoesque figure, with snow-white hair and with youthful face, which I have noticed is a feature of some of the most beautiful American women. Her *toilettes* were always simple but *distingué*. One in particular, I remember, of black velour chiffon, a princess gown without a vestige of trimming. The only touch of colour was a Dijon rose in her *corsage*. She was really a most commanding figure.

Then there was the Countess Massarene and Ferrar. She was a tall, graceful woman of the oriental type. She affected daring colours, which suited her well. She was the Eastern Princess of that horseshoe curve at Covent Garden.

Another stately woman, whom everybody admired at the Opera, was Lady Maude Warrender, the sister of Lord Shaftesbury. I remember how exquisite she looked in a beautiful gown of a pale satin *miroir* shot with yellow and *Maréchal au Niel* roses. She has become celebrated for her charity and her amiability since the beginning of the war. She possesses a beautiful soprano voice, and frequently sings for charitable affairs.

I found it inspiring to look at this *coterie* of beautiful women, who are the best "turned out" women

in English society, because most of their *toilettes* emanated from my house. I take no special credit in this, because it was not difficult to adorn such beauty.

This season of 1914, in London, was the most brilliant; it was full of the gladness and joy of pleasure.

A dominating figure of this London season also was Mrs. Asquith, the wife of the Prime Minister. As all the world knows, she is a remarkable woman. Her love and taste for music made her entertainments much sought after, especially as her daughter was a very clever, sparkling girl. Mrs. Asquith was a great favourite of the late Prime Minister, Mr. Gladstone, and before her marriage, as Miss Tennant, was one of the social features of London society. With her sister, the late Lady Riblesdale, whose husband, Lord Riblesdale, was the Beau Brummel of the latter part of the reign of Edward VII, she dominated a certain cultured element of London society. In this last great social season in London, of 1914, Mrs. Asquith was decidedly one of the cleverest women in England. Her daughter, Miss Elizabeth Asquith, assisted her mother socially at those delightful receptions of the Prime Minister. They were very largely attended, and it was

obvious that no party spirit prevailed at them. There was only a pleasant atmosphere which is usually inspired by intellect and charm. English society women have a notorious tact for drawing the line very sharply between social degrees. Their talent for this was very obvious at the exclusive afternoon teas and receptions. They rarely made a mistake in the mixture of their social "salads," if one may apply a vegetarian phrase, hence the unusual success of English hostesses.

Those afternoon teas, with a little music, and a great deal of flirtation, were not a bit abated at the opening of the London season in 1914. As in New York, the ladies gathered at small tables in public tea rooms. The biggest crowd could be seen in London at Rumpelmeiers', and at the Carl. on. The howling swells howled just as loudly as they had ever done, and those social sirens, Lady Sybil Grant, the Countess Crewe and her step-daughters, added to the gaiety of the scene by always bringing with them a galaxy of pretty girls. Lady Sybil Grant was the daughter of Lord Rosebery, the granddaughter of the late Duchess of Cleveland; her mother, née Rothschild, was one of the cleverest women of her day, who brought to her husband, on their marriage, a golden casket con-

taining a million pounds. The *salon* was famous because of her wit as a hostess and also because of her staunch conservatism. She was a great admirer and personal friend of Lord Beaconsfield, the Empire maker.

The Countess Crewe is the second wife of the Earl of Crewe. She was the elder daughter of Lord Rosebery. The step-daughters of Countess Crewe were very pretty and great favourites in society during this momentous season.

It was in these tea rooms that engagements were made for the *soirées dansantes*. Among the most successful of these events were the *soirées dansantes* at the Duchess of Wellington's, who, with her daughters, made everybody so very comfortable.

Among the other leaders of the season of 1914 were the Duchess of Portland, whose lavish entertainments at Welbeck Abbey were famous, and the Duchess of Somerset, who encouraged the gilded youths of London by always having a bevy of the prettiest débutantes at her dances. The Duchess of Somerset was among the first of the London hostesses to permit the Turkey-Trot and Tango to be danced at her house. There were many noble mansions where these dances were barred.

The most exclusive parties were those given by

the Duchess of Devonshire and the Duchess of Portland.

The Duchess of Portland (née Dallas Yorke) was the envy of the women of fashion in London because she managed, better than other matrons, to retain her slender, graceful figure. She always had a very girlish appearance. Her pearls were famous, and she was always recognisable by her favourite bunch of Malmaison carnations which she always wore. She looked every inch a Duchess. During all the years that she has been a social leader in London, the Duchess of Portland has retained a singular reputation for exclusiveness, being absolutely immune of a breath of scandal, to which English society women have been so justly or unjustly exposed. Her little daughter is the image of His Grace the Duke of Portland. She is *petite,* dark, dainty. She was very much appreciated socially. Her eldest brother, Lord Tichborne, joined the rest of the Englishmen for the good cause.

Her Grace the Duchess of Devonshire, Mistress of the Robes to Her Majesty Queen Mary, is the daughter of that most exclusive and proud aristocrat, the Duchess of Buccleuch, who herself was the late Mistress of the Robes, and the intimate friend

of her late Majesty Queen Victoria. Her home was the most distinguished and the most select in London. Nobody ever entered it whose credentials or whose history had ever had the slightest stain upon them. Their receptions were gorgeous, always royal. Their expenditures for these receptions were fabulous. From their Scotch estate came such quantities of game and other appetising resources that their Chef de Cuisine retired with a fortune and opened a hotel for himself in the south of France. Neither Her Grace the Duchess nor the Duke could or would dictate to their chef, hence his personal fortune was made. To-day economy is practised everywhere, even in this ducal household, and restrictions are vigorously enforced. They were ultra conservative, exclusive to a fault.

Westminster House was a magnificent edifice. The reception and ball rooms were modelled after the period of Charles II. There was a wonderful parquet floor, exquisite chandeliers and crystal sidelights. The illumination of this room was chiefly with old-fashioned wax candles, which gave it a peculiar charm. The Duchess of Westminster's affairs, that is to say, her entertainments and balls, had the flavour of ultra-modern democracy. One saw a great deal of physical beauty at them, one

THE COUNTESS OF WARWICK

The beautiful Countess of Warwick, who was in high favor with the Prince of Wales. It was the author's privilege to make most of the gowns, the lingerie, and the *robes de nuit* of this famous court beauty.

heard a great deal of wit, one saw exquisitely dressed women, and a great deal of parvenu and get-rich-quicks. The Duchess was very fond of blue, it was her favourite colour. Her lovely mother the Duchess of Buccleuch had, socially, been triumphant, for among her relatives she could boast of a princess and a duchess. She also had reigned supreme in that trio of beautiful women whom the Prince of Wales (later King Edward VII) admired so much. They were Mrs. Cornwallis-West, Mrs. Langtry, and Mrs. Wheeler. It was an embarrassing choice for His Majesty between these "Three Graces."

The day's work for a society enthusiast never included less than two receptions, a tea, and a ball which lasted until the early morning hours. For instance, one might go from a ball given by the Duchess of Westminster to a musicale at Lady M. Paget's house. It was at Mrs. Paget's home that one was sure to meet those beautiful American women, Madame von Andrée and her sister, Mrs. Chauncey Depew, both delightful hostesses.

The Duchess of Marlborough, in her lovely home in Curzon Street, always presented something novel in the way of amateur theatricals, and the Marquise de Hautepool, the great friend of Her Majesty

Queen Alexandra, was a very distinguished personality. She had quantities of ash-blonde hair, classic features, a slight, graceful figure, and more immaculate *toilettes*. She dressed in some degree to copy Her Majesty Queen Alexandra's style, whose most intimate friend she was and still is. Her agreeable manners made her very much desired.

Of course, London society would have seemed dull without the presence of the Countess of Warwick. Having no suspicion of the terrible disaster which came upon us towards the end of the season in London, there was no economy in gowns. The Countess of Warwick remained, as she always had been in London society, one of those adorable women who know how to appear always at their best. Her *toilettes* were in the very best of taste, and as she had *carte blanche,* there was no reason why they should not be. She was always so beautiful that she would lend enchantment to the dressmaker's inspiration. The elder son, Lord Brook, married a daughter of the beautiful Lady Eden, whom Whistler made famous. Lady Brook was almost as beautiful as her mother, slender and sweet as a mignonette. They have one little boy. Lord Brook joined the First Life Guards at the beginning of the war. Lady Warwick's daughter, the

Countess of Faversham, quite recently became a widow, losing her husband, I believe, at Mons.

Those *recherché* dinners, given by Mrs. Bishopsheim and her daughter, the Lady Fitzgerald, and her granddaughter in their sumptuous mansions in South Audley Street, were very much sought after. Her house was furnished superbly. She often entertained royalties, for she was a brilliant hostess. She dressed very sedately but very richly, and, above all, she knew how to grow old gracefully.

I was busier during this London season of 1914 than I had ever been before. There are few recollections of beautifully gowned women that are any clearer in my mind than the pretty figure of the daughter of the Countess of Lytton.

"My daughter's gown for to-night, Madame, it will be very smart?" the Countess asked me, with such tremulous eagerness. She was a simple, delightful girl, and the gown I made for her was a thing of freshness in tulle and snowdrops. It was most appropriate for the girl's slender blonde beauty. She looked like a snowdrop.

Madame Melba was the rage of this London season at the Opera. She scored tremendously in "La Bohême." Personally, I thought it was unfortunate that she had acquired the elderly spread of figure,

which was unbecoming to Mimi. However, Melba's success was not marred whatsoever by this deficiency.

The beautiful Mrs. Stevens-Kent, whose hair, though almost white, did not detract from the fresh youthfulness of her face, was a distinguished figure at the Opera, sitting in her mother-in-law's box, smothered in diamonds that were like coals. They were the famous black diamonds from Brazil. Their gorgeous mansion at Belgrave Square was a very popular place of entertainment.

Mrs. Clarence Mackay's social gatherings in Carleton House Terrace were among the famous events of London society in 1914. Her *soirées musicales* always included such famous stars as Kubelik, Kreisler, Mischa Elman, Madame Destin, and others. She always has some great figure in the musical world of all but priceless value, and her *soirées musicales* were a perfect crush. Anticipating the great crowds that would fill her room, she originated a very unique way of keeping them cool. Huge blocks of ice were cleverly hidden under smilax bushes. There were other features equally surprising. Little miniature lakes, where one could play with miniature boats. On one occasion her surprise to society was a water tank with

real fish, with tackle supplied for the guests to hook them. Mrs. Clarence Mackay, at this time, was a singular figure. She usually dressed in faultless white satin, not a vestige of colour. One rope of pearls clasped by a huge sapphire, and one black pearl. She was very oriental looking, and was usually surrounded by the Indian princes who happened to be visiting in London. The Maharajah of Kooch-Behar and the Maharajah Agar-Khan usually appeared superbly dressed in their native robes. It is customary for the foreign *attachés,* wearing their brilliant uniforms, to attend these *musicales.* Many of the Ambassadors were also present with their wives. One often saw the Prince and Princess Lichnowsky, the German Ambassador and his wife, Monsieur and Madame La Laing, the Belgian Minister and his wife. These fêtes, given by Mrs. Clarence Mackay in London in this last year of social splendour, were indeed very famous.

Mrs. Hope-Vere was among the beautiful women who were conspicuous during this last season of London gaiety. Her *salons* were always filled with people, and she was famous among her friends for her skill in choosing the right colours and the most graceful designs in gowns.

The Princes' Skating Club, a private and exclusive skating rink, where only the best society attended, gave Mrs. Hope-Vere her opportunity to appear in a skating costume that was very attractive and appropriate. It was a dark bottle-green velvet trimmed with skunk fur, with a muff and stole to match. The Princes' Skating Club was really one of the features of London society in 1914. To become a member you had to be introduced, then voted upon by ballot, before you could even be admitted. The result was that the most wonderful skating costumes were always exhibited at these gatherings. At tea-time it was impossible to find a seat in the tea-rooms, unless you had ordered a table beforehand.

The Duchess of W—— could often be seen with Mr. Gennadius of St. Moritz fame, exhibiting his wonderful skating evolutions with her.

To those who were familiar with the romances of high life the graceful figures which these two people exhibited on the ice were also a demonstration of a deeper meaning to the heart. Their romance began in the Tyrolean, now Bavarian Alps, it began on the very peak of the snow-capped mountains of Pontrasina at St. Moritz. Who has not inhaled the pure air amidst these scenes of snow-

white purity? The leitmotif of this exuberant romance was the Alpine simplicity and grandeur. Of course it was exhilarating, and the romance entwined itself about the hearts of the Duchess and the exhibition skater with binding vows that were never broken. Any one who visited the Tyrol country in the winter, will remember how fascinating those snow-capped nooks and corners are, where the little lichen-trees are almost entirely buried under the snow. It is a place where the tragedies and comedies, and perhaps burlesques, of love play havoc with men and women regardless of social position. That is how these two drifted into a lovely dream, and were rudely awakened by the great monster—scandal. It requires a sovereign to pour oil upon the troubled waters of this clandestine affair in an otherwise placid household. The Duke and Duchess parted. The Duchess has become a Sister of Charity, for the good of the cause.

It is also interesting, while dwelling upon the brilliancy of this last London season, to record the popularity of the officers of the Crack Regiments in London then. The officers of the Second Life Guards, the Blues, the Seventh and Twelfth Hussars, were especially sought after. They were very good fellows, although very often they preferred

sitting out a dance, either on the grand staircase or in the conservatory, where they indulged in a little love-making, a little wit, where they became engaged to the prettiest girls of the season, who, of course, did not dream that their stalwart, handsome husbands would be called to fight other battles than those of love.

I recall the mysterious effect upon the gaiety of the crowds, of the first rumours of war in London, toward the end of the season of 1914. How easily they were swayed from pillar to post. Of course, many people took advantage of the stock market, while the turmoil in London grew louder. Suddenly, one day, the streets were full of people, whispering. One saw the recruiting sergeants, parading up and down the principal thoroughfares. The public houses were crowded to suffocation, and the music halls were ringing with patriotic songs.

Every one was shouting "On to Berlin."

Such songs as "Sister Susie's Sewing Shirts for Soldiers" filled the air. Knitting needles were in every woman's hands. All London became absorbed in making socks, shawls, mufflers, for "Tommy Atkins." The Clubs were besieged with inquiries. All who were not English by birth went panic-stricken to the Home Office to obtain pass-

ports. For two weeks there was a universal cordiality from the British authorities towards those who wanted to return. I, myself, desired to be naturalised, and with my lawyers waited hours until my turn came to make my application. Universal courtesy was shown me by officers and well-meaning police officers, who handed me my papers to sign, adjusted many photographs of me to the papers, and then hoped, as did thousands of other people, that all would be well.

Everything had been moving along gaily and charmingly in England, up to this time. Even the murmurs and whisperings of July, 1914, had not reached the people. Those who were behind the scenes, and saw the huge war clouds rolling up, wisely concluded that silence is golden.

When the shell exploded, and its tremendous noise shattered the European foundations, business became immediately at a standstill. The moratorium was declared, and many people gladly accepted the opportunity to escape their debts. Then followed the Emergency Act, and slackers in payment under normal conditions felt very much relieved of their debts *pro tem.*

It was in the face of this crisis that the aristo-

cratic world of London took the initiative so splendidly.

So many women, prominent in London society, changed the whole course of their social lives at the outbreak of the war.

Lady Horlick at once sent a dozen automobiles to the Front for ambulance service, including her own. The Duchess of Westminster was one of the first English women who went to the Front to nurse the soldiers. Lady Fitz-Ponsonby crossed the Channel at once to distribute food and give first aid. Lady de Trafford entered the hospital to study nursing, and served at the Red Cross.

Lady Ermyntrude Malet opened her magnificent home in London to the convalescent. Lady Waterloo became a Red Cross nurse. Mrs. Dale-Lace took a course in nursing at St. Thomas's Hospital. Lady St. Maur and Lady Brassey, the Duchess of Somerset, the Duchess of Norfolk, all loaned their mansions to the wounded. Lady Talbot, Countess Fitzwilliam, the Duchess of Newcastle,—there were hundreds of these distinguished society leaders who adapted themselves to menial work in the hospitals. No work was too hard for them—they spared neither money nor pains to relieve the sufferings of their unfortunate heroes. It is a great

testimony to the character of these society women, that they made these magnificent sacrifices to help and encourage "Tommy Atkins."

Tea parties became veritable sewing-bees. After the declaration of war in August, 1914, sewing and knitting were the only occupation known to society. A central office was established in London, where bedding and clothing could be sent, to be forwarded to the front. I, among others, of course, sent quantities of blankets and sheets, and made hundreds of woollen shirts for the soldiers, until one morning I was physically and mentally shocked by a request to leave England. My maid brought up my breakfast to my bedroom, and on the tray I saw a formidable-looking envelope from the Home Office. I debated whether I should open it before breakfast or not. Curiosity made me waver. I broke the seal, and as I read and re-read the formal communication, I became speechless. My tears blinded me as I read the polite and very courteous request to leave England within ten days. The British Government also generously contributed for my departure a capital of ten pounds. I went, myself, and secured an eminent firm of solicitors to intercede for me with Sir John Simonds, who was then Home Secretary. The result was that I was per-

mitted three weeks in which to prepare for my departure, to take with me what I could gather before I became expatriated. So I had to leave the land where I had lived for forty-three years as a loyal and devoted subject, the land I hope to end my days in when hostilities are over.

My experience was probably little different from thousands of others whom the British Government helped because their alien connections might be inimical to the welfare of Great Britain.

In my despair and distress I addressed Her Majesty, Queen Mary, hoping that it could be possible for the Queen of England to intercede in my behalf. Her Majesty replied, with her usual graciousness and kindness of heart, that she would be unable to assist me.

All London by this time became the centre of patriotic England. The beautiful women whom I have gowned and whose fêtes I had attended, forgot all about dressmaking and clothes. Elaborate entertainments were immediately started to gather funds to take care of those poor people whose men were ordered to the Front, and were consequently left dependent upon some form of acceptable charity.

The Duchess of Rutland, Lady Diana Manners,

and Lady Beerbohm-Tree were especially active in instituting wonderful entertainments to gather funds for this purpose. My own observation was that the poor were literally overwhelmed with good things. One woman, who lived near my residence, informed me that she had never had so much money in her life before, nor so much freedom to use it. This may have been because her man was at the Front. My grocer told me that expensive dainties were now purchased almost exclusively by coachmen and chauffeurs.

While the aristocratic quarters of London were economising England was greatly aroused by the Belgian disaster. This demonstration seemed to touch the hearts of the middle class, seemed to impress them with a sense of their moral obligation to support their own poor. I know of many cases where well-to-do families took the deserving poor into their own homes and gave them the most humane and charitable care. I know of cases where aristocratic mansions with their entire retinue of servants were put at the disposal of the homeless exiled from Belgium. English charity is proverbial. There is no country in the world supporting so many hospitals and institutions by voluntary contributions as England, and yet there are

no greater contrasts of misery and great wealth than one finds in Great Britain.

Almost as soon as the war broke out, the society beauties of London became absorbed in charitable work.

I recall Lady Hesquith, an American beauty, as among those who were especially active. Her receptions before the war had been very distinguished. Lady Stewart-Richardson, whose dancing excited New York society a short while ago, symbolised her feeling of "sack cloth and ashes" by adopting the oriental dress of the Hindoos for every-day life. She wore sandals in the streets of London, and her veils were so adjusted that one could hardly see her eyes.

Among the last brilliant entertainments given on the eve of the war in London, were those at The Mansion House, where Lady Wakefield and the Lord Mayor of London dispensed hospitality. Every one talked about them. Lady Wakefield dressed superbly. She is a majestic-looking woman. I recall how exquisite she looked in a gown of real lace most beautifully draped. The train was of rich white Duchess satin, it was of great length and was carried by Maids of Honour dressed in pink taffeta. The *cortège* was beautiful in the extreme.

The Mansion House itself is a revelation of beauty. The grand reception room, with the portraits of former great city magnates, is very impressive.

I expect that in this room, some day, not far distant, there will be a more impressive gathering, when the industrial disaster of war will be adjusted.

CHAPTER XX

MY LAST DAYS IN LONDON

THE disaster crept upon London so gently as to be scarcely taken as a threat to the social gaieties. Of course, we women had been told how fortifications were being rebuilt, and many other details which pointed to a certain unrest in national life. Finally all eyes were obliged to see that England was embroiled in a fighting campaign, brought about I should say by the factions of different opinions.

The first real expression of war came to pass when we saw troops marching through the streets, who were being called out for service. Of course, there was a prevailing spirit of optimism, but at the dinner parties there was a forced merriment that did not entirely escape notice. In the midst of the most riotous jests, extraordinary rumours reached us. There was a good deal of criticism, for it is impossible for English people to believe that their idea of invulnerable national strength could

be in danger. The Ministers maintained a demeanour of smiling confidence towards all questions, and it was declared that no possible attack could be made without warning to the thousands who might be in danger. Then, one night, mysterious convoys went to and fro, and desperate efforts were made to hide their movements.

Then the last scene of the tragedy came. Those who knew most of the real situation were very chary of suggestions. The quick movement of events was fearfully foreshadowed in the grim happenings of that first day of war. We were in the city most of the day, and saw the excitement and courage in spite of it. Suddenly flags appeared in all squares, on the roofs of houses, on the walls. Great crowds gathered in the streets, everybody gesticulating, and it seemed as though every one was shouting, "To Berlin."

What a riot it really was. Perfect strangers meeting and embracing each other, men grasping each other by the hand in mutual congratulation. All the public buildings were besieged. It was a tremulous, inspiring excitement, which conveyed to you the spirit of the English people. Above the noise and shouts of the crowds one heard the sharp, penetrating command of trumpets in the streets.

The military bands of the different regiments seemed to be constantly coming and going. It was evident that no one would possibly intervene to reason with this national upheaval, it was also clear that there were no cowards. When the soldiers of different garrisons were notified to be ready, they rushed pell-mell to their places, fearing more to relinquish them than to take them. There was no pretentiousness or self-importance among the generals and officers who were called to duty. Every one sought only to become a servant of His Majesty George V of England, to protect his realm, and to achieve a glorious victory.

Colossal sums were at once demanded of Parliament by Premier Asquith, which were voted, and became huge loans. No one seemed to think of those who might be left behind, of the sorrowing. The retinue of the court became more gorgeous than ever, and music, especially military bands, was heard everywhere. There were, of course, the usual ambitious cynics who pacified the peevish people, and the Palace itself was constantly surrounded by a curious crowd. Much was expected of that great organiser, Lord Kitchener, who made plans to regulate every item of expenditure in the forthcoming

cataclysm. So, with varied feelings England waited for the hour to strike.

I was impressed with a fact that the chief support of those who deplored the national war spirit, was the familiar encouragement of the words, *"Entente Cordiale."* Of course, Parliament made much of this quality, and hastened the progress of this alliance amid scenes and ceremonies that were very impressive.

Kitchener was really the chief intellectual power of England's war plan. In doing this he steered a dangerous course over quicksands which threatened his personal safety. He had a highly strung temperament, and an intellect which saw much trickery around him, and which he was alert in combating. The work which he accomplished for England, I fear was out of focus with the times. His opportunities to regulate the forces of France were too short, and therefore he was unable to make the public see the future in clear equilibrium.

In London society, the gossips found a great field for their favourite occupation, although the war spirit had burst the bubble of folly and voluptuousness in which they had thrived. There were women in society whom it was foreseen would be a baleful force, but the country insisted that they

serve. Many of them, in doing this, had to abandon their *amours* with great men. Of course, there were great quantities of patriotic English women, who eagerly seized the opportunity to demonstrate their mettle, to throw down the gauntlet in defiance of feminine tradition, to put on, as it were, the mailed fist and to do their bit. Love, of course, had to take a back seat. I mean, of course, love as a pastime. Knowing a good deal of the inner complications of English society, it was obvious that love's tyranny was vanishing. There could be no more slavery of feeling. The women shook off the yoke of idle flirtation, and the men accepted the new order of things.

Every day brought new changes, but the balance in power of the future was hidden in the low, black clouds of war. Of course, royalty did not leave town. All sorts of sensational stories were circulated, and promptly contradicted, and all the while the crowds grew more dense in the streets. Finally the Palace was completely surrounded by mounted police. Great services were held in St. Paul's Cathedral, during these days preceding the war in London, at which the royal family attended. It seemed as though the religious element of Eng-

land was making an appeal to the Divine Power to grant peace to Europe.

The sight of the Crack Cavalry Regiments riding through the streets, which was once an incident of gaiety, made us all feel sad. Crowds of men and women of all classes followed the soldiers about. The chief impression to me of all this entanglement of feeling was that the powers of Lloyd George were manifest everywhere. With all the strength of his oratory and his eager temperament, he wanted above all things the glory of England. He demanded that the English Navy demonstrate the triumph of Great Britain's sea power.

Across the Channel, the chief sentiment of France seemed to be to regain the dominion of Alsace and Lorraine, including the greater part of the Rhenish country, through which they hoped to enter Germany. This was the plan talked of and anticipated successfully, not by temporary invasion, but by an orderly and skillful campaign.

Actually, however, there were no conditions in London itself, which expressed any fear either of food shortage or enemy attack. The ladies still danced in magnificent ballrooms—especially the new dances, those impetuous, ardent, swinging figures, and then to supper with plenty of champagne.

Neither politics nor war interfered much with the Music Halls, or the Movies. Some performances rose above the question of literary merit, but other performances were condemned as morally objectionable, because they contained allusions to the war conditions which the public did not appreciate.

Of course, great entertainments were planned for charity, in which society women were pledged to appear in extraordinary exhibitions. I recall a couple of singers, Delicia and Morton, who were appearing in an obscure café in London, were retained by a celebrated Duchess to teach her a very spicy and suggestive duet, in which she was to appear at a great charity affair for the wives and children of the maimed and wounded defenders of the country. I can give no idea of the enormous amount of charity that was set in motion, and the enormous sums that were raised in the name of charity.

Regretfully I must admit that there were a good many so-called society people who hailed war with Germany with intense delight, for the commercial rivalry of England had for many years been an annoyance to them. There were others in England, however, who at this period in the evolution of war, insisted that they were meeting a valiant foe, that

the task of conquering Germany would be a hard and severe strain for the country. The feeling against the enemy, however, was obvious. The ladies were more positive in its expression than the men.

German maids were dismissed. I knew of one lady who sent away her German maid who had been with her over twenty years, who nursed her through a difficult illness,—in twenty-four hours' notice.

Life in London became a perpetual caldron of boiling hatred. It would simmer down, only to shoot up with a more bubbling hatred, with overwhelming heat.

With other women in London, I made thousands of shirts for the soldiers.

The women of England became a powerful allied force for conscription, in spite of bitter tears they wept for the lovers they lost. Still, they were resolved to tread the future path of life with an independence of will that surpassed the expectations. I noticed a great change came over these lovely girls, when they had to learn by experience many unknown things. They were vivacious, proud, enterprising, potential Amazons, well fitted to hold the lance, the revolver, the gun. They really showed remarkable courage, the courage of men, which is

very rarely found in women. They became utterly regardless of the opinions of others. Some of these women who had been leaders in the spice of fashion, told me that after serious reflection, they came to the conclusion that the soul should not be susceptible to love. For this reason, they declared they wanted to go to war. They were brave and generous, they had the manner and the inclinations of men.

Of course all business was suspended, the streets were full of excited people, the shop-keepers stood on their doorsteps. The parliamentary orators talked brilliantly and terribly, while the British nation listened patiently and enthusiastically. Finally everything settled down to a universal spirit of patriotism, and life became more tolerable in London.

Amateur musical entertainments at the fashionable houses in London for charitable purposes, constituted a great attraction.

And now, how fare these ladies, these society butterflies, these arbiters of fashion, these social leaders, what are their thoughts? Outwardly, they demonstrated a furious and agitated movement to become nurses, sisters of charity, motor-car drivers, anything and everything to help to aspire to the new feminine diversion, of being warriors. In a

measure, they have all become heroines, Spartans. The spoiled children of society found themselves mingling promiscuously with shop-girls, actresses, upper-servants. Preferably these society women chose the open-air hospitals, and the Tommies have been enjoying the sensation of being nursed by women of the English aristocracy.

I saw Mrs. E. H. start from London for the front with twelve motor ambulances, driving one herself. With her was Lady de Trafford and the Duchess of Westminster. They rushed madly to Boulogne and Calais to give their personal aid, and indeed it was a tussle between them as to who should arrive first. Of course, everything was done at their personal expenditure. Every one was buying calico and lint. Every one was learning how to make bandages of medicated wool, how to apply anæsthetics, how to manipulate first aid. This was work which the ambulance corps started at once. The beautiful houses along St. James Park, opposite Carleton House Terrace, were turned into new convalescent homes. Even the balconies were converted into open-air wards. When I went into a famous shop I saw the ladies of the court purchasing cottons and haberdashery. There was Lady

Eva Dugdale, Lady Henry Somerset, conducting shopping expeditions for the wounded.

I confess that I felt desolate and wretched to find myself excluded from the land of my adoption, although it has brought me to this beautiful country, where I have met the delightful and gracious Americans and have become a welcome stranger.

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